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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Ninth Session of the Conference of
African Planners, Statisticians, and Population
and Information Specialists
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
11-16 March 1996**

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF AFRICAN PLANNERS, STATISTICIANS, AND POPULATION
AND INFORMATION SPECIALISTS**

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Ninth Session of the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, and Population and Information Specialists was held at ECA headquarters, Addis Ababa from 11-16 March 1996. The conference was opened by Ms. Nancy Hafkin, Officer-in-charge of the Pan African Development Information System (PADIS), on behalf of Mr. K. Y. Amoako, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.
2. The session was attended by the representatives of the following member States of the commission: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Equatorial, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
3. The following member States of the United Nations were represented by observers: France, India, United Kingdom, and United States of America.
4. There were representatives from the following United Nations bodies: UN Statistics Division, New York, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).
5. The following intergovernmental body was represented: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
6. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was represented at the Conference.
7. Observers were present from : Overseas Development Administration (ODA), United States Bureau of Census, Institute de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), AFRISTAT, Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), Institute Sous-Régional de Statistique et d'économie Appliquée (ISSEA), African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, (INSET), International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre, Comite Permanent Inter-états de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS), African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), Demographic Health Survey (DHS), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Statistical Office of the European Communities

(EUROSTAT), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Carnegie Corporation of New York and CEPED.

Opening address (agenda item one)

8. In his opening statement, delivered on his behalf by a member of the secretariat, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, outlined the aims of the meeting which included an examination of the economic and social situation of the region, reflection on the ways in which the disciplines represented could intervene together to improve planning and giving guidance to ECA on strategic assistance it could deliver to member States.
9. The Executive Secretary reported that African economic performance had improved only slightly in the last two years. Growth had taken place in the mining sector, but both agricultural and industrial production had fallen. While external resource flows had decreased, external debt had risen. The social situation had deteriorated further. In face of this rather gloomy picture, he stressed the need to make African economies more competitive through the aggressive pursuit of regional economic integration.
10. He introduced the major issues that the Conference would address including energy development, the analytical framework for policy reform, addressing unabated population growth, implementation of regional and global population action programmes and challenges of the urban environment. The participants would also tackle implementing more effectively the mandate of the Committee on African Statistical Development, Statistical Needs Assessment and Strategy Development (NASD) and the regional survey on statistical organization and training, as well as continued implementation of the *Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in the '90's*. On the theme of the Conference, delegates would examine how information technology could be used to accelerate socio-economic development in the Region, the work ECA was doing to promote information systems development in Africa and the importance of norms and standards in information work. A special feature of the Conference would be a data dissemination workshop, conducted by a representative of the United States Bureau of the Census.

Election of Officers (agenda item two)

11. The Conference elected Zambia as Chairperson, Senegal as first Vice Chairperson, Egypt as Second Vice Chairperson and Cameroon as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item three)

12. The Conference adopted the following agenda:

PLENARY MEETING

1. Opening Address
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Statistical needs assessment and strategy development, the African experience.
5. Building Africa's Information Highway
6. Progress report on the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration (DND) and the Cairo Programme of Action
7. Implementation of short-term forecasting systems for Policy Design and Economic Management in Individual African Countries.

Population Committee

8. Election of officers
9. An assessment of problems and policies associated with the urban environment in ECA member States
10. Perception on family planning in the context of socio-economic and cultural values in ECA member States.
11. Population activities in 1994-1995, examination of the approved programme of work for 1996-1997, draft work programme for 1998-1999.

Planning Committee

12. Election of officers
13. Strategic Planning and Macro-economic Management
14. Rationalization and utilization of energy resources in Africa
15. Report of the Institute for Economic Development and Planning
16. Examination of work programme.

Statistics Committee

17. Election of Officers
18. Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts in the African Region
19. The coordinating committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) and its Subcommittees, major achievement and selected issues
20. Regional Survey of statistical organization and training: Results of the Pilot Analysis.
21. ECA Statistical activities in 1994-1995, approved work-programme for 1996-1997 and trends for 1998-1999.

Information Committee

22. Election of officers
23. Prospects for information technology in Africa
24. Promotion of norms and standards for the exchange of development information in

Africa

25. Improved access to Development Information in Africa
26. Progress in the implementation of the ECA work-programme in development information systems and work-programme for 1996-1997.

Resumed Plenary

27. Adoption of report
28. Any other Business
29. Closing

Account of Proceedings

Statistical Needs Assessment and Strategy Development: The African Experience (agenda item 4)

13. The secretariat introduced this agenda item on the basis of document E/ECA/PSPI.9/2, "Statistical Needs Assessment and Strategy Development: The African experience".
14. The World Bank representative supplemented the secretariat presentation by describing a document titled "Statistical Needs Assessment and Planning: A review of approaches and Current Practices". This document follows and expands upon the Needs Assessment guidelines prepared by the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD). He mentioned that the document is a result of close collaboration of various agencies and African countries under the guidance of the CASD and its preparation has been coordinated by the World Bank. The document is intended to serve as an instrument for policy-makers, planners and statisticians and also as a guide to donors who may be approached to support statistical development in African countries. He further mentioned that the document describes the conceptual framework, assessment of national statistical needs, preparation of statistical plans, issues concerning institutional restructuring and a brief description of individual country experiences with statistical needs programmes.
15. Several participants thanked the secretariat for including this item on the Plenary session of the conference. In providing their country experiences in conducting NASD exercises, a number of findings such as lack of communication with users, slow delivery of outputs, existence of unorganized data in many government departments and the need to organize such data, and need to conduct workshops of users were reported by many participants. It was emphasized that a NASD exercise is a user-producer endeavour and the team chosen or appointed to conduct this exercise should where possible include planners, statisticians, researchers and the private sector experts. In one country the NASD exercise led the Statistical Office to examine sectoral data requirements for monitoring programmes financed by the United Nations Development Programme under the country Indicative Planning figure (IPF).

16. Some participants were of the view that NASD exercises should be properly coordinated, country specific, and should not be imposed by external partners. Also while, users and producers are involved in NASD exercises, decision-makers should also be included in this group. Regarding assistance that may be required in support of NASD exercises, ECA was requested to contribute to the mobilization of resources which may be required by countries.
17. Participants wanted to know the type of problems countries experienced in carrying out their NASD exercises. The secretariat explained that the survey on Statistical NASD which it conducted in November 1995 did not specifically request information on problems which countries experienced. It was however intended to request those countries, which conducted these exercises, to provide copies of their reports to the secretariat to enable documentation and study of various aspects of these exercises including problems which countries experienced.
18. Participants also wanted to know why some countries had not conducted the exercises. The secretariat explained that the conduct of these exercises is dependant on many factors such as availability of resources, priority setting with respect to other statistical activities, etc. It was the hope of the secretariat that the situation regarding countries participation in conducting these exercises will improve during the next two years.
19. The special situation of Rwanda, particularly regarding the training centre at Kigali, which the country relied upon for its manpower for the functioning of the statistical system was explained. The need to re-initiate and reconstruct the national statistical system and the training centre at Kigali was recognized by the meeting.
20. The representative of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) gave information on how to request financial support from the European Union. The representative of the International Labour Organization clarified the connection between the ILO and the Eastern Africa Management Advisory Team (EAMAT) in view of EAMAT involvement in the NASD exercise in Uganda.

Building Africa's Information Highway (agenda item 5)

21. The secretariat introduced document E/ECA/PSPI.9/4 "Building African's Information Highway" under agenda item 5. In response to ECA resolution 795 (XXX) with the same title as the agenda item, the document presented a proposal for an African Information and Communication Initiative, an action plan to accelerate African socio-economic development through the application of information technology to all social and economic sectors. The plan had been drafted by a High Level Working Group of African Experts in Information and Communication Technologies appointed by the Executive Secretary. The present Conference was serving as peer review of the plan before its presentation to the thirty-first session Conference of Ministers to be held in Addis Ababa in April-May 1996.
22. In the debate on this agenda item, participants requested information on the possibilities of technical assistance from ECA in the area of harnessing information for development. ECA's new

programme structure, to come into effect in July 1996, was described, whereby the Conference theme would become an area of strategic focus. In addition, ECA was co-chairing the task force on the same theme under the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa which was launched during the Conference. Participants stressed that Africa should participate as producers as well as consumers on the information highway. Among other areas, software production was suggested, as an industry which African countries should consider entering. The need to sensitise policy makers to the importance of this new global social and economic phenomenon was raised, so that they could create the necessary enabling environment for African countries to participate fully in it. Some delegates expressed concern about the possible negative aspects of global information infrastructure. While mechanisms to combat these disadvantages were described, it was noted that the technology should not be discarded because of a small number of disadvantages and that Africa had no choice but to enter the global information age.

Progress report on the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration (DND) and the Cairo Programme of Action (agenda item 6)

23. In presenting Document E/ECA/PSPI.9/5 on "Progress Report on the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Cairo Program of Action", the secretariat explained that the periodic reviews of the various Declarations on population and development planning call the attention of policy makers and programme implementers to the current status, trends, achievements, strategies and weaknesses in existing population programmes as well as the need to continue policy support to the programmes and to commit more resources to the efforts.
24. Given the limited time frame following the adoption of both development frameworks, the conference noted that, among other factors, the indicated attempts by member States at implementing the recommendations, have been fostered by the challenge posed by high fertility together with increased commitment and positive perceptions of and attitudes towards population issues. However, such attempts have been hampered by the prevailing social and economic crisis and the associated declining budgetary provisions caused by structural adjustment programs and the continuing prevalence of socio-cultural attitudes and practices which impede effective implementation of population programs.
25. The conference was then informed that a mechanism has been devised and guidelines have been prepared by an Experts/NGOs Workshop organized in 1995 by the Joint ECA/OAU/ADB Secretariat in liason with the UNFPA and IPPF to enable member States monitor and evaluate the implementation of their National Population Programs based on the recommendations of the two development frameworks.
26. In the resulting discussion, some delegates (i) reported on the efforts made by their governments to implement the recommendations of both development frameworks; (ii) raised issues with the failure (by the secretariat) to undertake impact studies; (iii) the non inclusion of the emerging demographic transition in some countries as well as the constraints posed by the pervasive poverty and high mortality. While the secretariat took note of the reported efforts as well as the reference to the African Population

Commission which is served by a Joint ECA/ADB/OAU Secretariat, it explained that impact studies was a long term possibility. The demographic transitions are historical; such interventions as the DND and the ICPD.PA only accelerate the momentum in population growth decline.

27. The Conference then urged member states to establish focal points (if they have not done so) to liaise with the secretariat as well as utilize the indicated Guidelines in the task of continuous monitoring of national efforts at the implementation of the recommendations in the two development frameworks.

Implementation of short-term forecasting systems for Policy Design and Economic Management in Individual African Countries (agenda item 7)

28. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ECA/PSPI.9/17 entitled "Progress report on the implementation of short-term forecasting systems for policy design and economic management in individual African countries". The secretariat, on reporting on the status of implementation of the system in some African countries, gave a detailed account of the uses of social accounting matrices and its analytical framework for the benefit of the countries that wish to establish the Social Accounting Matrix-based short-term forecasting systems; outlined the problems encountered in implementation and the major prerequisites for establishment of the system at the country level.
29. In the discussion that followed it was mentioned that the present level of data in some African countries may not be sufficient for construction of such high statistically demanding systems. It was suggested that countries continue to work with simple models such as those of the multi-lateral institutions until such a time the statistical data base is adequately developed. It was also mentioned that it is important for countries to start looking for ways and means of strengthening their data base rather than wait. It was found most opportune that this plenary meeting brings together data producers and data users to discuss this important issue. While, on hand, it is a challenge for data producers to meet such demands, there is a lot of data that was produced but not used. It was also mentioned that lack of data should not constrain countries from building economic models that help in guiding their planning process, even to the extent of using externally generated data, since model building is a continuous process bound to improve over time to give consistent and reliable results. It was indicated that this process should be guided by national experts who would acquire the knowledge for developing, maintaining and sustaining this process.
30. In response, the secretariat mentioned that there is no dichotomy in pursuing simple models while developing other models of relevance to planning requirements. In this regard, he referred to the ECA reference standard model on SAM-based short-term forecasting systems, that integrates the totality of the economic system with social issues, as a more useful tool for planning purposes than simple limited-purpose models. It was specifically stated that such models help in making year-to-year

analysis and appraisal of short- and medium-term plans and to adjust them in cases of discrepancies of actual and planned targets. On data availability, in particular the accumulation of unused data, the representative of the secretariat mentioned that the SAM framework has the advantage of organizing economic and social data in such a way to provide meaningful and useful information for socio-economic planning for decision-making.

POPULATION COMMITTEE

Election of Officers (agenda item 8)

- 31.. The Population Committee elected Mr. Martin Balepa (Cameroon) as chairperson; Dr. Ibrahim A. K. Magdy (Egypt) as first vice chairperson; Mr. Diouf Papa Demba (Senegal) as second vice chairperson; and Mr. Bruce Andrew Hibbert (South Africa) as rapporteur.

A study on family planning in the context of socio-economic and cultural values in ECA member States (agenda item 9)

32. The paper for discussion under this agenda item was **Perceptions on family planning in the context of socio-economic and cultural values in member States, E/ECA/PSPI.9/7**. It reviewed various factors that contributed to the general resistance to the acceptance of modern family planning in the 1960s and 1970s and the subsequent changing attitudes. It then discussed some of the obstacles to the implementation of family planning programmes and how these obstacles could be overcome.
33. The secretariat pointed out that pronatalist attitudes on family planning were influenced by socio-economic, cultural and religious values. These values encouraged early marriages and early child bearing till the end of a woman's reproductive period. With modernisation, traditional mechanisms for birth spacing became less followed and this gave rise to high levels of fertility which impact adversely on the health of women and children in the absence of wide adoption of modern methods of family planning.
34. Due to socio-economic pressures, and better understanding of the interrelationships between population and development, attitudes at government level on large families started to change in the mid 1980s and 1990s. Unfortunately, change in perceptions had not quite filtered down to the majority of the population at the grass-root level in the rural areas. This was an obstacle to implementation of family planning programmes. Other obstacles included: policies not being translated into implementable action programmes; weak administrative, management and institutional infrastructure; and inadequate financial and material resources for programmes.

35. Recommendations proposed by the secretariat emphasised the following aspects regarding improving family planning programmes: a) strengthening information, education, and communication activities in order to achieve a positive attitude towards family planning, especially at the grass-roots level; b) translating population and family planning policies into implementable action programmes in the context of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action; c) improving the administrative, management and institutional infrastructure for programmes; d) increasing the allocation of financial and material resources to programmes, as well as proper use of resources; e) improving the education of girls and women and their status; f) involving both women and men in family planning programmes; g) involving communities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in various aspects of programme planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation; h) integrating population and family planning programmes into the socio-economic activities of various government ministries and those of the private sector and NGOs; i) improving the quality of services and their accessibility to all who need them, including adolescents; j) monitoring and evaluating of programmes in order to improve their implementation.
36. In the discussions that followed, the Committee appreciated the paper and its importance. It emphasised the need for family planning programmes to be implemented in the overall context of improving the general socio-economic conditions of the people. Thus material support, services and facilities needed to be provided to improve production, especially in the rural areas.
37. One of the observations raised in the Committee was that data presented in the tables in the paper on perceptions should have been related to total fertility rates and that detailed data should have been provided on contraceptive prevalence. However, detailed data on contraceptive use was contained in a Statistical Compendium on Contraceptive Use in ECA member States and was later made available to participants. Another issue raised was that consequences of ageing had to be kept in mind for the future though this was not of immediate concern to most countries at present.
38. The Committee observed that weak information, education and communication and problems of translating commitment by governments into action were among the factors impeding family planning programmes. It expressed concern at donor reduction of resources for training and research which were of paramount importance to family planning programmes. The staff delivering health and family planning services needed to be trained adequately. There was a need to improve the salaries of such staff where the remuneration was different from other staff and to provide them with incentives. An example of such staff would include those providing community-based distribution services.
39. Some participants outlined some activities in which their countries were involved. In Uganda, some pilot projects were under way with the assistance of the Catholic Church on the use of natural family planning as one of the methods of contraception.

- This is being done to provide an option where other contraceptive methods are not socially acceptable. In Nigeria, a conference involving participants from government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations was convened in January 1995 on the outcome of the ICPD Programme of Action. The government was currently preparing a blueprint on the implementation of the recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action; the World Social Summit; and the Beijing Conference on Women.
40. The Committee stressed the importance of reducing infant, child, and maternal mortality as integral components of the objectives of family planning programmes. Thus the Committee recommended that health centres needed to be accessible to the majority of the population. It also stressed that family planning programmes should be viewed in the context of reproductive health as reflected in the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action. The Committee called for programmes to pay attention to both qualitative and quantitative aspects of family planning programmes.
 41. Regarding future studies on population and family planning, the Committee recommended that these should include studies which focused on case studies on how perceptions were translated into effective programmes. Moreover, some of the studies should be undertaken in the context of democratization to show how that process was responding to regional diversity in population issues.
 42. The Committee underlined the need to involve religious authorities to support family planning programmes, and non-governmental organizations to assist in implementing family planning programmes as well as those related to general socio-economic development such as income-generating activities. Indonesia was an example where religion and improvements in socio-economic conditions had contributed to effective implementation of family planning programmes. The Committee encouraged study tours to countries with successful programmes so that lessons from those countries could facilitate programmes in African countries.
 43. The Committee took note of the recommendations in the paper.

An assessment of urban environmental problems and policies in selected ECA member States (Agenda item 10)

44. The secretariat in introducing this agenda item referred to the background document, "An Assessment of Urban Environmental Problems and Policies in Selected ECA member States", E/ECA/PSDPI.9/6. The representative of the secretariat stated that the growth of urbanization in African countries had had profound consequences on the economies of African countries and the lives of city dwellers. He noted that the environmental problems at home, in the work place and neighbourhood included contaminated and inadequate quantities of water; inadequate provision for sanitary management and disposal of solid and liquid wastes and inadequate or prohibitive costs

of health, educational and other social facilities. Among the policies the secretariat discussed were those on institutions, management and demography.

45. In the discussion that followed, a participant drew attention to the role non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played and are playing in tackling various problems of urban environmental degradation. Innovative approaches to the problems in other developing regions were also cited.
46. A plea was made to sensitize the population as a whole and students in particular about the problems associated with environmental degradation. The advantages of recycling should be promoted.
47. Urban poverty along with the lack-lustre economic record of African countries in recent years were also identified as causal factors exacerbating urban environmental degradation.
48. In the context of the recommendation urging African municipal authorities to generate more information on the environmental profiles of their cities, it was suggested that the distribution of funding for research - both local and international - should in future make more provision for projects on population distribution and redistribution and mortality in addition to the favoured areas, fertility and family planning than had been the practice in the past. This change in funding would assist in more fully comprehending urban environmental problems, it was noted.
49. It was observed that although the level of urbanization in Africa as a whole was relatively low, around 34 percent in 1995, there were differentials, with the Southern and Northern Africa subregions already having rates around 47 and 45 percent. In addition it was pointed out that despite this relative low level of urbanization compared with those in developed countries, urban areas are important as foci of sustainable development as they are increasingly becoming the locations where the largest part of the populations of African countries live and work and where most economic activity is taking place. It was observed that the rapid rate of urbanization was a more serious problem to environment than the level of urbanization.
50. It was pointed out that the role of migration in urban development and its effect on the environment should not just concentrate on its adverse consequences as migrants also play beneficial roles in urban areas, for example in the area of environmental management. In this connection the important role of urban-to-urban migration in migration to cities as well as rural-to-urban to the growth of some cities in Africa was underlined.
51. With respect to strategies to improve the administration of cities in Africa, training and improvement of the remuneration of municipal workers along with sensitization of students about the advantages and disadvantages of urbanization were emphasised.

52. Other innovative strategies that have been employed to tackle urban environmental problems in various countries e.g. growth poles selection, operationalization of central place theory, garbage recycling and reclamation of valuables from garbage were referred to.
53. The secretariat stated it would include innovative strategies and accounts of success stories in environmental management and other comments made in the discussion in future revision of the paper.

Population activities in 1994-1995, review of 1996-1997 work programme, and consideration of draft work programme, 1998-1999 (agenda item 11)

54. In presenting this agenda item the representative of the secretariat referred to the background paper, "Population activities in 1994-1995, examination of the approved programme of work for 1996-1997, and draft work programme for 1998-1999" E/ECA/PSPI.9/8. He gave a brief account of the performance of ECA in population activities, the constraints faced and the prospects. He announced the planned meeting of the Dakar/Ngor Follow-up Committee in coordination with the African Population Commission and explained the process of change taking place at ECA with the importance of Population stressed by the fact that its growth is seen to be driving a nexus, that embodies also Environment, Food Security and Human Settlements.
55. In the discussion that followed, participants expressed their satisfaction for the excellent performance of the Population Division. UNFPA as well as participants wanted to know if the planned change in the ECA structure will comprise a separate Unit giving visibility to Population, as was the case in the past, and/or population will be spread over several units. The chairman and other delegates raised similar questions regarding the future substantive structure of the ECA secretariat, the new activities and visibility of the Population Division within it.
56. In his reply the representative of the Secretariat described the process of change that has already started which will result in a substantial clustering of activities under five subprogrammes. The activities of the present Population Division would be included in the subprogramme on, "Enhancing food security and sustainable development." This subprogramme is expected to result in improved policies for agricultural productivity, population and environmental management in African countries. He indicated that the Executive Secretary has initiated broad consultations on Strategic Directions for ECA that will continue soon with partners and donors, before a draft version will be submitted to the next session of the Conference of Ministers of ECA. Then a new structure with new substantive Units will be put in place as of July 1996.
57. In concluding the session, the Chairman commended ECA for all the initiatives taken in the population field, before and after the Cairo conference and for the quality of work demonstrated. The Committee recommended the design of the 1998-1999 work

programme after the adoption of the structural change in ECA.

RIPS

58. The document E/ECA/PSPI.9/3 presented by the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) provides a brief discussion of the history of RIPS, its contribution to the process of human capacity building in Africa and its future plans.
59. Since its inception RIPS has operated within a University system, with regard to graduate studies, the character and standard of the syllabus, the standard of examination papers and other matter related to the awarding of degrees.
60. The presentation discussed the main activities of RIPS which comprise formal courses training, ad hoc/short term training, research and advisory services. It was pointed out that RIPS had replaced its 12 months graduate diploma programme in Population Studies with a new 12 months Master's degree in Population Studies in the 1985/86 academic year. Since the 1985/86 academic year RIPS has also undertaken training at both M. Phil and Ph.D levels. From October 1985 to September 1993 M.A. intake totalled 300 students and 272 or 91 per cent passed and were admitted to the degree. Out of 40 students admitted to study for the M. Phil degree, 32 had completed the programme successfully. RIPS has so far produced 5 Ph.D while two are presently hoping to complete the Ph.D programme in 1997.
61. Research has always played an important role in the training activities of RIPS. Both staff and students undertake research activities. Students have to satisfy all the M.A. degree requirement including submitting a dissertation of 20,000 words, while staff have carried out various research in line with their own interest and expertise.
62. Because of the critical role of funding, the presentation enjoined member States to honour their annual contribution of US\$15,000 to ensure the sustainability of RIPS. It was noted that since its inception RIPS has benefitted from generous financial support given by UNFPA, but up to date the response of member States to their financial obligations has been very disappointing with the exception of Ghana and Nigeria which have made regular contributions while Zambia, Uganda and South Africa have made contributions recently.
63. The presentation also highlighted some guidelines to future activities of RIPS that include:
 - (a) the training of statisticians, demographers and population and development specialists to reorient their professional competence to the changing needs of member countries, the training at M.A. level of candidates from the new nations' such as Eritrea, Namibia and South Africa;
 - (b) the continuation of collaboration between RIPS and the national training

programmes.

64. Three specific recommendations from the sixteenth RIPS Governing Council meeting held from 22 to 23 August, 1995 with immediate relevance to member States were highlighted, namely,

- (a) to encourage member States to make their contributions and on a regular basis,
- (b) that during future student admission, full tuition should be charged to students from non paying member States,
- (c) to invite national training institutions to include a budget line for RIPS in their budget and to transfer the funds to the Institute.

65. RIPS work plan for the period 1996 through 1996 through 1999 will involve training at M.A., M. Phil and Ph.d levels although the largest number of fellowships will be devoted to training at the M.A. level. Research activities will be intensified and at least two large scale surveys on the "Role of Women in Fertility, Child Survival and Health Decision Making in Ghana" and "Urban Housing and Living Conditions in Greater Accra" will be undertaken. It is also envisaged that RIPS will continue to provide advisory services to member States on demand.

66. The discussion which followed the presentation centred mainly on two issues namely, sustainability of RIPS and collaboration among regional institutes/centres. In view of dwindling financial resources from UNFPA, it was suggested that RIPS should work out a sustainability strategy. The strategy should include providing consultancy services in the field of population for a fee.

67. Short term training courses which are easily marketable e.g. a course on population information management should be designed and offered to generate addition income for RIPS.

68. In order to diversify its sources of funding it was suggested that RIPS should explore the possibility of soliciting funds from other organizations/donors like the Rockefeller Foundation, Population Council, Ford Foundation and USAID. RIPS should also apply to the OAU for financial assistance through African Population Commission.

69. With regard to collaboration it was suggested that RIPS should work out modalities for collaborative work in research, teaching and exchange of research findings.

IFORD

70. The Director of IFORD reported on activities of the Institute. He indicated that its restructuring was completed in October 1994.

71. Regarding training, IFORD has designed a new syllabus that went into implementation in October 1995, as a continuation of earlier changes, taking into account DND and ICPD.PA. It covers the *Maîtrise, the Diplôme d'Etudes Spécialisées, Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies and Doctorat*. Most fellowships are now funded from national population programmes. The last two batches of students comprised 23 and 29 students coming from 15 and 11 countries, respectively.
72. Research is conducted in a five year programme cycle . The 1990-1994 programme was winding up, in spite of constraints. The new programme will be submitted for the approval of the next session of the Governing Council. Among the activities undertaken the Director alluded to the *Programmes de Petites subventions pour la recherche sur les aspects socio-économiques et culturels des maladies tropicales* and the recent convening in Yaoundé of an International Seminar on the theme: Women and Resource Management.
73. IFORD continued its advisory services; the following countries benefitted from its intervention: Cameroon, Comoros, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Chad. Moreover, IFORD continued to be the executing agency for UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID, etc. to undertake studies on population issues. IFORD also continued its publication activities.
74. The Director underlined major difficulties in running the Institute as a result of insufficient and irregular payment of contributions by member States. Only Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Senegal had paid their assessed contribution since the last session of this Conference.
75. The Committee commended the Director of IFORD for his report and the quality of services rendered. It encouraged him to continue in that direction. Advisory services, in particular, were discussed and clarifications sought. The Director was invited to intensify efforts in disseminating the results of research among member States.
76. The secretariat, on behalf of the chairman of the Council, paid tribute to the former Directors of RIPS, Dr Patrick O.Ohadike and of IFORD, Dr Daniel M. Sala-Diakanda, respectively, for their management in leading the two institutes and for the scientific prestige gained by RIPS and IFORD. He made an appeal to member States to show better will in supporting IFORD and RIPS which are centres of excellence that Africa is proud of. Member States should pay their assessed contribution as evidence of this support. Finally the secretariat informed the participants that the post of director of RIPS has been advertised.
77. The Committee suggested the following list of topics to be considered for the next session of the Conference and/or to be included in the 1998/99 Work Programme depending on the resources available. The Committee further mandated the secretariat to prepare such programmes in line with the envisaged changes in the secretariat:

1. Population and Food Security in Africa
2. Adolescents and Reproductive Health in Africa
3. Population and development interrelationships: Emerging Issues and Policy Implications.
4. Demographic Transition in Africa - An assessment
5. Population, environment and sustainable Development - Trends and Issues
6. Gender and sustainable Development: constraints and perspectives
7. Demographic and Socio-cultural Dimensions of Reproductive Health in Africa
8. Implementing the DND and ICPD-PA for sustainable Development - the Challenges
9. Progress Report on the activities of the African Population Commission (Joint Secretariat)
10. Child and Maternal Mortality
11. Socio-economic Challenges of STDs, HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Planning Committee

Election of Officers (Agenda item 12)

78. Mr. Qouaqouaq Abdelilah (Morocco) was elected Chairman of the Planning Committee with Mr. Dissy Santos (Senegal) as first Vice-chairman and Mr. George M.K. Beekunda (Uganda) was elected Rapporteur.
79. The Planning Committee followed the agenda (items 13-16) as adopted by the Plenary Session of the ninth Session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians Population and Information Specialists.

Strategic planning and macro-economic management (agenda item 13)

80. The Planning Committee considered document E/ECA/PSPI.9/18 on the Conference theme of strategic planning and macro-economic management. It took note of the current state of planning in Africa and reviewed the conditions for strategic planning in Africa as described in the document.
81. The public investment programmes (PIPs) which had replaced national development planning in most African countries had many deficiencies, chief among which were the lack of a long-term vision and the difficulty of achieving coherence in programmed investments. What was more, effective mechanisms for programme harmonization were often lacking and rational criteria not always applied in official project selection. Then again, external financing was not properly taken over in many of the facilities built under specific projects so that they ran the risk of going without maintenance.
82. Significant progress has been made in economic modelling but the Revised Minimum Standard Model (RMSM) is based on a minimal number of borrowed parameters deliberately reduced to the barest minimum. The statistical apparatus was considerably

late in coming up with forecasting data hence rendering its credibility and reliability as a forecasting tool questionable.

83. In Africa, national experiences in strategic planning were a recent phenomenon. The aim was to conduct national long-term perspective studies and to institute a continuous process of development thinking and management which would make planning an instrument for securing clarity and coherence in selecting policy options. The pursuit of this approach should make it possible for member States to formulate long-term objectives that could serve as points of reference for short-term economic management and medium-term planning.
84. During the discussions which followed, the Committee acknowledged both the relevance and quality of the study. Several delegates recounted the ongoing experiments in their countries and should take into account Structural Adjustment Programmes. Some of those experiments which dated back to 1987 followed the proposed approach but strategic planning still raised a number of issues.
85. Generally speaking, there were, among other things, such external constraints as those imposed by structural adjustment, fluctuations in world prices of those commodities of export interest to member States, the changes occurring at an increasingly faster pace in the world economy and the imperatives of subregional and regional integration. There were also such natural constraints as the vagaries of weather and internal constraints such as the issue of taking prices into account, the magnitude of budgetary operating expenses which constantly clashed with the medium-term priorities, resulting in insufficient domestic resources to finance planned investments.
86. It was also observed that the cost of perspective studies was extremely high for poor countries. There were many gaps in the currently available statistical data. The statistical and planning services did not have enough human and material resources and the staff especially were not sufficiently motivated. Hence, the staff turnover rate was high. Furthermore, the lack of political will created a situation in which budget and planning forecasts were not always harmonized rationally. All that impeded progress on strategic planning in Africa.
87. In answer to the questions raised, the secretariat pointed out that strategic planning (in its various stages, particularly the diagnostic study phase, the formulation of scenarios and the derivation of strategies therefrom) should address fundamental development issues before the adoption of the long-term vision to be pursued. The strategy should primarily aim at creating an enabling national environment for the repayment of debt phased out over the long term. It would be necessary to appeal to development partners to cooperate in this respect.
88. Regarding implementation of the strategic plan, short-term forecasting should be carried out within the context of a comprehensive and country-specific macro-economic framework which takes the bearing from long-term vision.. It should be

based on concerted effort among the various sectoral ministries and steadily reinforced on a regular basis to meet the long-term vision. International organizations like ECA, ADB and UNDP should provide assistance with the preparation of long-term perspective studies, and their translation into medium-term plans and short-term programmes while, in the interest of economic integration, such studies are coordinated at the regional and subregional levels.

89. It was urgently necessary for countries to update their statistical machinery for policy analysis and planning if realistic and actual planning is to be revamped. The same applied to the adoption and application of strict project selection criteria which reflected the long-term vision in medium-term programmes.

Rationalization and utilization of energy resources in Africa (agenda item 14)

90. The Planning Committee considered the document entitled "Problems Associated with Sustainable Energy Development and Rational Use of Resources" (E/ECA/PSPI.9/20/Add.1) which raised the issues of economics of energy, its development and utilization in Africa: namely those related to energy production or supply, energy demand or consumption, and energy balance.
91. The Committee noted the major problems inherent in the supply-oriented policies that existed so far in Africa for the past two or three decades and the consequential low level of energy development and use of the energy in contrast to the large and diversified resources potential available. In spite of the abundant energy resources, the present energy supply is dominated by traditional biomass energy and oil with adverse consequences to the region's environment and possible climate change. This paradox between the vast energy resources and the low level of energy consumption is usually attributed to the lack of investment capital, the mismanagement of the energy sector and the lack of trained and qualified manpower for the formulation and implementation of energy programmes at the national level.
92. The Committee further noted some of the major problems related to the present reforms of the energy sectors following the demand-oriented policies and strategies. While structural changes along these lines is applauded by African states as a whole, the systematic implementation of such reforms may require time, particularly in connection with rural energy supply as a driving force behind the need for policy reforms. In view of the crucial nature of the rural energy problem in Africa and the current shrinkage of public investment finance in the energy sector, implementation modalities such as the decentralized energy supply system, smaller-scale capacity build-up, and the intensification of renewable energy technologies are noted with emphasis.
93. It was noted that the issue of privatization and deregulation of the energy sector will have to be addressed in the African context and that there was need for the gradual privatization and deregularization of the energy sector as a starting point until the management capability of governments develops in the privatization process.

Commercialization or partial privatization of State owned enterprises, where total privatisation is not possible, should be encouraged.

94. Before the discussion of this item, the Committee questioned whether the discussions should concentrate on the main document on which case the French version should be provided or on the summary. The representative of Secretariat responded by saying that a summary was provided both in English and French for discussion and the presentation of the Secretariat was based on this summary. The main document which is available only in English serves as a background document. The same document should be translated in French and distributed to all Francophone countries.
95. In the discussions that followed, the Committee exchanged views of the country experiences on the major policies and strategies adopted for the supply and utilization of energy. Several countries expressed their concerns over the underdevelopment and the low utilization of energy and stressed the need to harness and utilize Africa's vast energy resources in order to achieve sustainable development. Some countries were of view that the diversification of the energy use away from the traditional energy to include also commercial energy and other alternative sources of renewable energy will enable the development of all energy sources on the basis of their viability and the specific needs to be met.
96. The Committee was also of view that the decentralization of the the energy sector was the cost-effective way to increase access to energy supply in the rural areas, to promote energy efficiency and conservation and to minimize damage to the environment caused by the extensive development and utilization of wood biomass energy. This will need a provision of pricing, fiscal and other incentives to encourage the exploration and development of indigenous energy resources in the rural areas, in particular the vast solar energy and hydropower resources. The subject of rural electrification was of particular interest in the sense that it helps increase the agricultural production, promote the rural industries and generate improvements in the fields of health, education and training. It also offers enhanced prospects for employment opportunities. Further more, small-scale energy development will facilitate production efficiency and a competitive pricing of energy output, away from state or corporate monopoly.
97. The Committee discussed at length the issues of privatization of the energy sector and questions were raised as to which types of privatization is appropriate to the energy sector. Experiences learnt from several African countries show that full privatization was not an easy task, in view of shortage of both human and financial capital. It was agreed that partial or gradual privatization was the way forward for the majority of African countries which face a dearth of skilled manpower and inadequacy in management entrepreneurship.
98. The Committee stressed the need for greater cooperation in energy sector development at the bilateral and multilateral levels and noted with satisfaction that several countries

and subregional institutions (such as ECOWAS, ECCAS, COMESA and AMU) have established protocols of agreement for the enhancement of cooperation in the energy sector. At the regional level, the Committee reiterates the recommendation by the African ministers responsible for the development and utilization of mineral resources and energy that the "African Energy Commission initially and provisionally should be established as a loose body serviced jointly by existing institutional capacity in the ECA, OAU and ADB and the subregional economic groupings, until the time is opportune for the creation of the African Energy Commission".

Report of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) (agenda item 15)

99. The representative of IDEP introduced the report of the Institute, document E/ECA/PSPI.9/19. The report covers activities implemented over the past two years, 1993/94 and 1994/95, including future planned activities within the framework of IDEP's Medium-term Strategic Plan (1996-2000). Also covered in the report is a review of some key decisions taken by the Governing Council at its 36th and 37th meetings followed by an account on the composition of the Governing Council. The report gave details of the activities in training, research, advisory and consultancy services.
100. IDEP's adverse resource situation was, notably, forcefully registered during the 36th and 37th meetings of the Governing Council with an ad-hoc Committee on Resource Mobilization. The Committee proposed modalities for securing adequate resources for maintaining current operations and efficiently plan for future developments. The 37th meeting of Council also examined the draft Host Country Agreement.
101. In the context of the UNDP preparatory assistance project (RAF/92/011), a Medium-term Strategic Plan (1996-2000) was developed which included a set of operational programmes viz 6 short-term economic management workshops, 5 sectoral specialization courses, a research programme, and a consultancy and advisory services programme. These were submitted to a Donors' Conference held in Dakar from 4-5 December 1995. While some donors indicated interest in providing budgetary and financial support of specific proposals, others committed themselves to contributions in-kind.
102. In the discussion that followed, the delegates noted the following issues; actual enrolment figures for the basic training programme were so small compared with the number of admissions. A specialized course on poverty alleviation be included in the Medium-term Plan. Research studies on ECOWAS and UEMOA be distributed to member states. Regarding the main sources of funding IDEP, it was recommended that efforts be made to increase the share of extra-budgetary resources from consultancy activities in order to reduce the share from member states contribution in light of the realities of the situation. Concerning the composition of the Governing Council, delegations from the combined Eastern and Southern Africa subregion, called

for attention to the imbalance in allocating 3 positions to that subregion of 21 member states compared, for example, to the Northern subregion with only 6 member states. The delegates called for an amendment of the IDEP statute so as to separate the Eastern from the Southern Africa subregions. Some delegates also demanded an amendment of the IDEP statute to make the chairmanship rotate among member states rather than having the Executive Secretary of ECA to occupy that position as ex-officio.

103. However, the representative of IDEP informed delegates that the low enrolments were due to the fact that member states are required to search for fellowships which are inadequate, but where particular programmes are fully funded (including fellowships), enrollments and admissions are the same. Regarding the request for a specialized course on poverty alleviation it was explained that this was indirectly reflected in course modules on agriculture, human resources, and gender, among others. Regarding the concern expressed about combining the Eastern and Southern subregions, it was agreed that the problem would be resolved if ECA adopts 5 subregions as in the Abuja Treaty.
104. The delegates recommended the following to replace the outgoing members on the IDEP Governing Council and replace the members retiring. The recommendations are to be approved by the Conference of Ministers. The new composition of the Governing Council becomes effective by 01 January 1997.
105. For the Northern Africa subregion, Tunisia was reelected and Morocco is to replace Sudan. The three members of the Council from the Northern subregion will therefore now be: **Libya, Egypt and Tunisia.**
106. For the Western Africa subregion, consultations continue as delegates of other member States in the subregion not present at the Planners Committee meeting have to be consulted before a final decision is taken. The decision will finally be taken at the next REPCOW meeting.
107. For the Central subregion, Rwanda and Central African Republic replace Burundi and Cameroon, while Congo is reelected. The three members of Council from the Central Africa subregion will therefore now be: **Central African Republic, Congo, and Rwanda.**
108. For the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion, Malawi replaces Namibia. The three members from the combined Eastern and Southern Africa subregion will therefore now be: **Ethiopia, Malawi and Swaziland.**

Examination of work programme (agenda item 16)

109. A representative of the secretariat introduced document E/ECA/PSPI.9/21 entitled "Report on ECA Development Planning Activities (1994-1995) and Examination of

Work Programme (1996-1997) with Consideration of the Strategy for the Period 1998-1999" The representative informed the meeting that the document deals with three parts. Section one gives an account of the activities that were implemented during the biennium 1994-1995; Section two surveys the work programme approved for 1996-1997, while section three gives the broad element and strategy for the projected work programme for the period 1998-1999 based on the proposed Medium-Term Plan 1998-2001. The secretariat invited the meeting for suggestions and comments that might guide the preparation of the 1998-1999 work programme.

110. In the discussion that followed the meeting noted that member states should have been advised in advance for their contribution on the broad areas that should feature in ECA work programme for 1998-1999. The meeting noted that ECA should play a leading role in assisting countries in finding solutions to some of the pressing problems and stressed the need for ECA to undertake research on issues relating to the poor participation of Africa in global trade. It was felt important that Africa should develop adequate competitive capability particularly in manufacturing sector in order to avoid marginalization in international markets. Stress was also made on the importance of planning the social sector in particular addressing the current crisis of education and training. It was suggested that efforts should be made to come up with modalities and strategies for developing the social sector in particular areas of finance. The concerns of women are also highlighted as an important area. It was recommended that a study be made reflecting on the proper concerns of women in mainstream economic planning and not merely being considered as a social problem. It was also noted that in spite of the efforts to achieve positive developments at the macro-front, poverty is increasing at an alarming rate. The meeting observed that more attention will have to be given to devising concrete actions for fighting poverty rather than focus on monitoring and analysing poverty. The debt problem is also singled out as an important issue. Debt has continued to be a major problem in Africa's development that requires the initiation of a complete package of modalities to deal with debt management.
111. In response, the secretariat welcomed the comments of the participants and indicated that their contributions will be taken into account in the preparation of the work programme for 1998-1999.

Statistics Committee

Election of officers (agenda item 17)

112. The Committee on Statistics elected Mr. Lukhele D.M. (Swaziland) Chairperson, Mr. Dera Lassane (Burkina Faso) First Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Gaafar Mostafa M.S. (Egypt) Second Vice-Chairperson, and Mr. Kaba-Mbouala (Congo) Rapporteur.
113. Also, following the proposal of additional agenda items by the representative of Nigeria, the Committee added the following three items to its agenda: (i) Developing

and Strengthening African Household Survey Capability Programme: Funding through donors and governments to develop Integrated Household Surveys in Africa to monitor social goals; (ii) Strengthening the STPA Centres and generally statistical training in Africa; and (iii) Archiving statistical information at both regional and national levels: Strategies and approaches.

Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts in the African Region (Agenda item 18)

114. On this agenda item, the Committee considered document E/ECA/PSPI.9/13 which reviewed national plans and strategies for the implementation of the new SNA in Africa, highlighting the assistance need of African countries and the role that ECA and international institutions could play in that regard.
115. During the ensuing discussions, several members of the Committee pointed out the difficulty of collecting reliable basic data and properly managing national inventories of business establishments, given the poor response rate achieved during surveys and the frenetic pace at which production plants were emerging and disappearing in certain sectors. Also noted was the lack of continuity in national accounting work because of high staff turnover and the late compilation of national accounts for technical and logistic reasons.
116. The Committee deplored the fact that most African countries had not been able to date, to compile all the 1968 SNA accounts and tables in general and institutional sector accounts in particular. Some participants stressed the need for governments to be provided with up-to-date data and recommended that ECA and the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies should assist African countries in the collection of basic data and consider how best to assist them in compiling speedy, provisional and simplified accounts.
117. Emphasis was placed on the usefulness of regional and quarterly accounts as well as on the need to develop indicators for monitoring the short-term economic situation. Some participants requested clarification on the types of support provided or planned by ECA with regard to the compilation of satellite accounts for those sectors (particularly the environment) accorded priority by the countries. ECA was also invited to conduct a census of the available software that could be used in national accounts. Furthermore, the Committee endorsed the secretariat's view that the speedy and efficient implementation of the new SNA in Africa would depend largely on the provision to African countries of many types of assistance, based, as a matter of priority, on training, the financing of basic data collection exercises and direct technical cooperation.
118. The representative of ECOWAS indicated that the Community had organized in 1989 a seminar with ECA technical assistance as part of the efforts to improve national accounting in the member States. Subsequently, a national accounts development

programme had been developed in 1995 by a meeting of ECOWAS experts. In June 1996, a working group would meet to prepare a programme for the harmonization of the methods used by member States to compile national accounts. Furthermore, ECOWAS planned to organize with ECA assistance, in the coming months, a subregional seminar on the implementation of the new SNA.

119. The representative of France informed the Committee that France and the European Union had recently initiated a project for improving national accounting in countries of the ACP Group using a computerized module for compiling Supply and Use Balances and Input-Output Tables. The module was a national accounting approach based on the building of a data base that could be used to construct annual input-output tables as well as to process all aspects of a comprehensive accounting system following the rules of the new SNA. The module had been tested and installed in the Central African Republic and Cameroon. Côte d'Ivoire was at the stage of conducting a study on installing the module. English and Spanish versions of the module would be produced in the coming months.
120. The representative of EUROSTAT indicated that African countries could access the module free of charge (which had been jointly developed by EUROSTAT and France) upon request for the installation of this software based on their national or regional indicative programmes figures. In his view, the module was interactive.
121. The FAO representative briefed the participants on the manual on Economic Accounts for Agriculture prepared by his organization. He stated that contact could be made with the FAO Statistics Division in order to obtain further information on the manual.
122. The representative of the United Nations Statistical Division confirmed that UNSD was working closely with ECA in the implementation of the 1993 SNA. He informed the Committee that a post of interregional advisor in national accounting had recently been created in UNSD so as to enable it to provide direct technical assistance to countries which so request.
123. The representative of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE) University of Makerere, informed the Committee that ISAE had instituted about five years earlier, two programmes for the training of national accounting specialists. The first was a nine-month post graduate training programme while the second was an 18-month programme for preparing a masters degree in national accounting. In his view, short term courses were useful for the immediate implementation of SNA but did not enable trainees to acquire advanced skills in national accounting.
124. In response to the many comments and suggestions of participants, the representative of the secretariat briefly described the types of support provided or planned by ECA in the implementation of the new SNA. He informed the Committee that two ECA experts were spending about one week in Mali to help that country devise a methodology for the compilation of regional accounts. With regard to satellite

accounts on the environment, the ECA Statistic Division had initiated in 1995, with financial assistance from the Government of the Netherlands, a regional programme for improving and developing environmental statistics in member States. He ended by stating that he shared the view of participants that delays in the compilation of national accounts should be reduced and ways found to institute quarterly accounts as well as to prepare indicators for monitoring the short-term economic situation.

The Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) and its Sub-committees: Major achievements and Selected Issues (Agenda item 19)

125. For the discussion of this agenda item the Committee had at its disposal the following document: The Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) and its Sub-committees: Major achievements and selected issues (E/ECA/PSPI. 9/14)
126. In introducing the document, the Secretariat recalled the circumstances which led to the adoption of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, and the Strategy for the implementation of the Plan of Action within which framework the CASD was established.
127. With regard to the achievements of the CASD, the Committee took note of the following: the establishment of CASD Sub-committees in the areas of: Training; Research, Methods and Standards; Data Processing; and Organization and Management of National Statistical Systems.
128. Selected issues discussed included: the need for African countries to get more involved in CASD activities; strengthening of the CASD secretariat; mobilization of resources for CASD activities and for statistical development in Africa in general; as well as the future of CASD and its Sub-committees.
129. The Committee took note of the various actions which had been taken to accelerate the implementation of the Plan of Action, as well as publications issued by the CASD. Also noted was the fact that the CASD had been reconstituted during its sixth meeting, 8 -11 March 1996 in order to allow for more involvement and participation of African countries in its work, and that the CASD Sub-committees have been dissolved after fulfilling, in the case of three Sub-committees, their terms of reference, and in the case of the fourth Sub-committee, a large part of its mandate. It is the intention to establish task forces to deal with specific tasks within a specified time frame.
130. The Committee observed that the present agenda item had been extensively discussed during the sixth meeting of the CASD and that there was no need to repeat those discussions, conclusions and recommendations in the present Statistics Committee since most of the Directors of the National Statistical Offices present in the Statistics Committee were present at that meeting.

131. Nonetheless, the Committee reiterated the need to ensure wide dissemination and use of the need the CASD publication; Framework for Measuring Statistical Development in Africa, in order to provide for proper monitoring of statistical development.
132. It was strongly recommended that the Secretariat of the CASD which is located in the ECA Statistics Division be strengthened and enabled to perform its tasks efficiently.

Regional Survey of Statistical Organization and Training: Results of the Pilot Analysis. (agenda item 20)

133. The secretariat introduced this item on the basis of document E/ECA/PSPI.9/15 "Regional Survey of Statistical Organization and Training: Results of the Pilot Analysis" and E/ECA/PSPI.9/15/Add.1 "Regional Survey of Statistical Organization and Training: Results of the Pilot Analysis, Staff and Training Summary Sheet".
134. In the discussion that followed, participants thanked the secretariat for the effort made to bring this action to conclusion. They however stated that what was expected from the results of the survey were recommendations which unfortunately were not included in the documents presented to them. The secretariat explained that conclusions and recommendation would be included in the final report which will be published soon. The secretariat preferred to receive comments and observations on the results of the regional survey before drawing up a set of conclusions and recommendations.

ECA Statistical activities in 1994 - 1995, examination of the approved 1996 - 1997 Work programme and trends for 1998 - 1999 (agenda item 21)

135. In introducing the document E/ECA/PSPI.9/16 for consideration, the secretariat reported that, on average, 95.1 of the total of professional work-months originally provided in the programme budget was available during the biennium 1994-1995, compared to 90.5 per cent during the biennium 1992 - 1993. The ratio between programmed and implemented quantifiable activities and outputs was 98.5 percent. Further, the secretariat reported that among outputs/activities that had not been programmed but were undertaken for a variety of reasons, was support to the First Joint Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) and the African Statistical Association (AFSA), held in May 1995, at ECA headquarters.
136. With regard to the Work programme for 1996 - 1997, it was reported that as a result of reduction in costs a number of activities in the original proposals for the programme budget had been omitted. The work programme 1998 - 1999 will be built on the new structures that will emerge out of the ECA renewal process and will aim at a stronger thematic focus.
137. During the ensuing discussion the Committee made, among others, the following observations, comments and recommendations: expressed appreciation for the commission's work in the area of statistical development; it commended the support

given to the organization of the First Joint Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) and the African Statistical Association, and recommended that summaries of the workshops on Monitoring Living Conditions and Poverty; and Principles of Data Interpretation and Presentation be included in the publication of the proceedings of the Conference; also recommended were the further development of indicators for monitoring social development, women in development, poverty alleviation, etc. in the 1998 - 1999 work programme. Also to be included is a Status Report on Household Surveys in African Countries since the 1980s, and some explorative work on data archiving. It was noted that since the termination of the annual seminar for directors of African national statistical offices which was organized by the Munich Centre for Advanced Statistical Training, there has been fewer opportunities for those persons to meet and discuss emerging issues on statistical development and design strategies. Therefore, the Committee wondered why fewer and fewer of those directors now participate in the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, and Population and Information Specialists. The Committee requested that a survey be conducted to find out reasons for the decline in their active participation in the Conference and that a report on the results be presented to its 10th session.

138. Finally, the Committee expressed a wish for a speedy conclusion of the ECA restructuring exercise, and a hope that the new structure will provide the necessary and adequate financial and human resources and the enabling environment for the statistical component of the Commission's work to have more impact on the African member States; also that the Secretariat of the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development be enabled to function more efficiently.
139. The representative of the United Nations Statistical Division informed the Committee that the Workshop on Statistics on services in the Informal Sector of Developing Countries, postponed from 1995 due to the implementation of the special measures related to the financial situation of the United Nations, is now planned for 17-21 June 1996, in Addis Ababa.

Additional agenda items

Developing and strengthening African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) (agenda item (21a))

140. As a result of the termination of the UNDP funding support for the promotion of AHSCP in 1993, the 8th session of the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers (PSD) deliberated on the future of the Programme and consequently passed a resolution for the resumption of funding support for AHSCP and forwarded the same to the Conference of ECA Ministers. Because no progress had been made since 1994 in this direction and because of the strategic role Integrated Household Survey Programmes at the national level play in the statistical development of the

continent, the issue had been brought before the 9th Joint Conference for further deliberations.

141. It would be recalled that prior to the drawing up of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa, a survey of the state of African statistics established the following problems bedeviling statistical development:
 - . poor management of statistical offices
 - . inadequate funding for statistical production
 - . unsatisfactory quality of produced data
 - . inability to respond quickly to new data needs.
142. Installation of Integrated Household Survey Programmes in the National Statistical Systems had been found appropriate to remove such problems through; the operation of master samples thereby saving money in frequent sample designs for individual surveys, possibility of cross-classification of collected data also enabling internal consistency check of data, integration of data collection activities and development of survey infrastructures like the establishment of permanent field force and field offices, and competence in survey methodology data processing. An integrated survey programme also enhances the ability to respond to data needs for programme/project monitoring and evaluation.
143. Two examples confirm the versatility of an integrated survey programme. The Nigerian national Integrated Survey of Households (NISH) with its core General Household Survey (GHS) and its several modules of National Consumer Survey, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, Labour Force Survey and Family Planning Survey had produced reasonable volume of data to support government programmes. The other is the UNICEF initiative in developing Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) to provide data for the monitoring of the National Plan of Action on Children Goals and Mid-decade and Decade Goals adopted by the World Summit on Children.
144. Further emphasising on the need to strengthen AHSCP, the ECA Secretariat, however, recognized that African countries today are not as homogeneous as they were 20-30 years ago, identifying three distinct groups of countries, namely:
 - countries that need both technical assistance and funding support;
 - countries that have technical capability but no adequate resources to carry out household surveys;
 - countries in which capabilities exist but these are not based in the CSOs.
145. Different strategies would have to be adopted for the various groups. Development of AHSCP, it was stressed, would have to be based on four criteria - country ownership of the programmes, simplicity, surveys must be home-grown and household survey initiatives at the country level must be backstopped by programmes of methodological research. The Secretariat indicated its support for an initiative which

would facilitate development of such programmes in the countries. The meeting was informed of an inter-agency meeting on sampling coming up later in the year to be sponsored by ECA/UNFPA/UNICEF but with participation of all interested agencies.

146. During discussion, several contributors attested to the robustness of a National Integrated Survey Capability Programmes in providing data and endorsed any action aimed at revamping the programme in Africa. Some of the suggestions and requests made included:

- . Assistance in development of Master Sample and cartography
- . Strengthening of analytical capacity
- . Evaluation of data produced so far
- . Strengthening dissemination capacity
- . Development of household survey programmes as an instrument for meeting line ministries requirements under reimbursable arrangement
- . Need for donor-support rather than donor-driven survey programmes
- . Importance of regular core-survey modules within the programmes
- . Opportunity to build into the programme ad-hoc surveys which should be paid for by users
- . Importance of carrying out needs assessment as this leads to ownership of statistical production programme
- . Evaluation of the use of permanent field force

147. **Recommendations**

- (i) As part of the strategy for improving African statistics, that ECA member States be encouraged to develop an integrated household survey system in their countries through the support of the African governments;
- (ii) ECA to consider revival of AHSCP as a priority for statistical development and therefore should allocate funds to it from its budget for technical support and training;
- (iii) The emphasis of renewed AHSCP should be on monitoring survey activity in the countries, provision of technical support, promotion of methodological and conceptual development and training;
- (iv) CASD to discuss this issue further in order to see what strategy to adopt for promoting it;
- (v) ECA to give status report on integrated household survey programme in Africa since the 80's.

Strengthening the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) and Generally Statistical Training in Africa (Agenda item (21b))

148. The representative of Nigeria introduced this agenda item. He stated that this item was discussed at the 8th session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statistician, Demographers and Information Scientists and a resolution to strengthen STPA was adopted by the conference for submission to the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning. He mentioned that since UNDP funding for the STPA programme ceased in 1993, there are no meetings of Directors of STPA Centres, ECA does not participate regularly at advisory Board/council meetings of statistical training centres and nobody knows what is happening with the statistical training schools. This situation deserves attention to enable solutions.
149. The representative of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE) gave detailed information about the STPA which was launched in 1978. The objectives of STPA, institutional arrangements and implementation aspects of STPA were described. A survey to evaluate STPA achievements was conducted by ECA in 1993 and led to conclusions and recommendations to revitalise STPA. The problems included: lack of equipment, scarcity of financial resources, low remuneration of staff, lack of fellowships to train the trainers and for students, limited physical infrastructure in anglophone centres, low admission and output of women, lack of management courses and inadequate applied research and research funds. In his view, the following actions are needed to strengthen the centres, namely, African governments should take on more responsibility for financing the centres, the centres should be restructured to make them more cost effective and efficient and enable them to generate income, and donors should be requested to supplement the government and centres' incomes. In addition, a statistical needs study of East and Southern Africa conducted in 1993-1995 and supported by European Union funds indicated that there was a need for training staff at both middle and professional levels.
150. The FAO representative stated that in most of the African countries, the training of statistician is aimed at satisfying the staffing requirements of the civil service. With structural adjustment taking place in many African countries, and the freezing of recruitment of staff, there are many statisticians who have no jobs, which is a source of frustration. He wondered for whom the statisticians were being trained.
151. The representative of AFRISTAT expressed his disappointment at the non inclusion of this item in the agenda of the Conference. He then suggested that this topic should be included in the next conference. Further, he stated that STPA was adopted by the Conference of Ministers hence its disappearance should also be endorsed by the same conference. He mentioned that lack of financial support for STPA does not imply that the conference should not continue discussing this important matter. He called for a review of the criteria for selection of STPA centres in future. The AFRISTAT representative recommended that an in-depth assessment of the 20 years of STPA

should be undertaken and that a working group to be attended by African countries and SPTA centres should be organized to deliberate on reviving the STPA.

152. The representative of the International Program Centre (IPC) stated that his agency is trying to support training in Africa by providing inventory of training materials, jointly offering courses, etc. He proposed that training centres should communicate with each other more frequently to ensure knowledge on the availability of training courses.
153. The representative of the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC) stated that the over supply of statistical manpower has been caused by regional concentration of assistance in the development of infrastructure for statistical training. Unfortunately the STPA stopped before solving this problem. He stated that some STPA centres may need restructuring and the coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) could look into this matter.
154. The representative of the "Institut Sous-régional de statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ISSEA)" described the work of his institute which was set up by six member States of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) to train statisticians, provide refresher and advanced training and to conduct research. Due to lack of funds, only the training component had been developed and was functioning normally. The research component was at the experimental phase with a think-tank. Currently, ISSEA was reviewing its curriculum with a view to opening up to the private sector which would, in future, be employing the trained staff. ISSEA appealed to development partners and specialised agencies, including ECA, to provide such material and pedagogical support as would enable it specifically to achieve its objective of establishing a department which would conduct research into the economic integration problems of countries in the UDEAC subregion.
155. The representative of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) agreed with the view that training centres should reduce their dependence on donors. On training of statisticians, he suggested that this could be linked to demand.
156. In conclusion participants were of the view that this topic needs to be re-addressed and appropriate actions taken. Participants recommended that the CASD should discuss this matter and if possible establish task forces to try and find solutions to the problem.

Archiving Statistical Information at both regional and country levels - strategies and approaches (Agenda Item: (21c)

157. In introducing this topic, the meeting had at its disposal a document entitled "A proposal for strengthening Africa household data archiving, servicing and dissemination capabilities".

158. It was observed that there was a huge body of survey data, much of it from household socio-economic surveys in Africa and population censuses, which is generally inaccessible because its existence is undocumented and or it has not been exhaustively examined and analyzed. Given the fact that enormous investments of financial and human resources had been made in the collection and generation of these bodies of data, it was imperative to find a means of addressing the further utilization of these data.
159. It was suggested in this presentation that an appropriate response to this problem would be to strengthen data storage and dissemination capabilities at the national level on the one hand and to establish a Central Repository of data at regional and/or sub-regional level. Such a service would create an exhaustively inventory of data and meta-data of socio-economic relevance in the Africa region, provide technical assistance in its archiving, storage and distribution, conduct the data acquisition function and provide user services such as negotiation for the release of data intended for different categories of users.
160. It was proposed that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa would constitute a natural choice for locating such a centre, since these activities would form a logical extension of ECA's on-going programme.
161. Potential benefits of such a centre would include improved availability of statistics for Africa and member countries as well as for international and sub-regional agencies including bilateral and multilateral donors, improving the flow of data within African countries, across African countries and between Africa and the rest of the world. One caveat expressed was that if the centre was to be successful in the functions envisaged, it should enjoy the full participation of the member countries.
162. In the ensuing discussions, the following views were expressed:
- (i) Since the United Nations system is entrusted the responsibility of collecting socio-economic data and rendering it comparable, the Regional Commission is the appropriate place for receiving and disseminating these data. The data also need to be well defined and characterized and strict quality control exercised. One such measure might be the provision of full meta information about the data. Data should also be harmonised and made consistent both within and across countries and in time.
 - (ii) It should be made clear why, where and for whom data is being prepared, since this will necessarily inform the structure of the Central Repository or archive.
 - (iii) ECA might be instrumental in helping users gain user-friendly access to such a service.

- (iv) Initially the archive might be constructed in such a way as to allow member countries to retain actual data, while it is inventoried in the Central Repository. That way, member countries would be allowed to make the critical decision as to whom to disseminate specific data items to and at what time.
- (v) The United Nations Household Survey Capability Programme should be resuscitated in the form of a data archive. A lot of data was collected under the auspices of this programme during the 1980s. Effective use could be made of this accumulation of data for policy analysis and further research.
- (vi) Potential users of the data stored in the Central Repository may need to be trained so as to make better use of the service to be offered. In this regard, relevant workshops and technical assistance will go a long way to helping member countries.
- (vii) There is a need for the rationalization, coordination and harmonization of existing multiple archival centres within countries.
- (viii) Problems of confidentiality and political interference with the timing and/or release of data deemed to be sensitive should be addressed.

163. In conclusion, it was observed that in the historical evolution of problem solving in the international statistics arena, the major areas demanding solutions have moved from first data collection with the improvements in technology through an emphasis on data processing and analysis to the current challenge of enabling and enhancing the process of data dissemination, archiving, storage and secondary distribution for further analysis.

Information Committee

164. The Information Committee of the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Population and Information Specialists met at ECA from 11-16 March 1996. It was attended by 52 participants.

Election of officers (agenda item 22)

165.166. The following Bureau was elected :

Chairperson:	South Africa:	Mr. Thozi Nomvete
Vice Chairperson:	Egypt:	Dr. Ashraf A. Ismail
Rapporteurs:	Gabon:	Ms. Veronique Paraiso
	Gambia:	Mr. Ibrahim Jobe

167. The following agenda was adopted:

- 6) Election of officers;
- 7) Prospects for Information Technology in Africa;

- 8) Promotion of Norms and Standards for the Exchange of Development Information in Africa;
- 9) Improved Access to Development Information in Africa;
- 10) Progress in the Implementation of the ECA Work Programme in Development Information Systems and Work Programme for 1996-1997.

Prospects for information technology in Africa (agenda item 23)

168. Introducing agenda item 23, the secretariat presented document E/ECA/PSPI.9/9 which detailed four main technologies for increasing information access in Africa, notably Desktop Publishing, CD-ROM, Online and Internet. The state of African electronic connectivity was described. To promote access, the document stressed the need for Governments to adopt policies on information technology. The importance of building national information grids was stressed, along with the objective that Governments be major players on the grid.
169. In the debate on this item, the need to sensitize decision makers to the potential of information technology for African development was emphasized. Participants urged the involvement of all possible players in developing a national information policy, especially including telecommunications authorities. The crucial element of harmonization and co-ordination at national level was underlined. The need to develop intra-regional connections was pointed out. Regarding different levels of development, with rapidly falling prices for information technology, countries which are new to technological development could advance to the latest technological level at the point of entry. In determining priorities for action, it was said that for maximum effectiveness, connection to the global information infrastructure, development of local infrastructure and infostructure (information content) needed to be done concurrently. The development of national information content was especially emphasized, so that African users of electronic services could become both producers and consumers of information. Effective training of users to maximize the potential of the technology was considered essential.
170. Information was provided on numerous bi-lateral and multi-lateral resources available to African countries to finance connections to Internet. Most funding, however, was contingent on an enabling environment which included liberalisation of telecommunication services and involvement of the private sector as information service providers. The crucial issue was raised as to whether promoting advanced technology was a priority for African countries when meeting basic needs was the concern of the majority of people. The new technologies should not be used to create an information elite, but rather strong efforts had to be made to decentralise information and communication services to reach rural peoples and empower the poor. Many felt that the new technologies could be used to plan better for meeting basic needs.

Promotion of norms and standards for the exchange of development information in Africa (agenda item 24)

171. On agenda item 24, the secretariat presented document E/ECA/PSPI.9/10 "Promotion of Norms and Standards for the Exchange of Development Information in Africa". The document discussed the needs of African countries to promote norms and standards, especially for information handling and described ECA' work standards for information handling and processing. Since 1987, through the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Information Systems in Africa, standards had been developed for document analysis, authority files for data entry, common formats for a CD-ROM of African development information, and for database searching by e-mail.
172. It was pointed out that the rate of change in information and communication technology was very rapid. Standards had to be regularly reviewed, updated or annulled as necessary to keep abreast of technological change. The process of moving from the development to the dissemination and acceptance of standards was detailed. PADIS was encouraged to intensify its efforts to disseminate both the standards that had been developed as well as information for development in general to participating member States and institutions in its network, as well as to all others in the region concerned with social and economic and scientific and technical information. The Committee felt that the present challenge for information professionals in Africa was to move from information management to information dissemination. New technology had made this possible, and falling prices made it affordable to African countries. The need for private sector involvement in the development of value-added information services was stressed.

Improved Access to Development Information in Africa (agenda item 25)

173. In introducing document E/ECA/PSPI.9/11, entitled "Improved Access to Development Information in Africa" (agenda item 25), the secretariat described the importance of using information for socio-economic development endeavours. Africa's data information needs, problems of accessing information for development in Africa, and how the African decision makers can access to information for development were described. In discussing this item, delegates noted that the problem of accessing information for development in Africa was related to the availability of resources, and that the ECA should cooperate with African member States to initiate programmes to mobilise resources to strengthen the information sector in Africa. The committee urged PADIS to organize sensitization seminars for senior Government officials to impress upon them the importance of putting resources in the information sector. The committee further stressed that with the increasing availability of information on development issues, ECA/PADIS should make efforts to decentralize information access to reach users. Furthermore, information products needed to be developed that were easily available to the end user, both in accessibility as well as in formats they could understand.

174. The committee further underscored the importance of member States adopting national information policies and requested PADIS to distribute guidelines that would assist countries on this issue. In stressing the necessity of national systems for the exchange of information, the committee suggested that for decision makers, this could take the form of decision support systems. Along with increasing availability, work had to be done to promote information seeking-behaviour on the part of users in Africa which could begin with the introduction of informatics into school curricula. In order to build capacity at national and subregional levels in the handling of information for development, the committee requested PADIS to intensify its training programmes. It was suggested that PADIS enlarge its efforts to involve universities, institutions of higher learning, and professional associations in Africa in its training activities.

Progress in the implementation of the ECA work programme in development information systems (agenda item 26)

175. For agenda item 26, the secretariat presented document E/ECA/PSPI.9/12, "Progress Report on ECA Development Information activities (1994-1995), work programme (1996-1997) and provisional work programme (1998-1999)," detailing PADIS' activities in training, advisory services to member States, subregional and regional institutions and in information systems' development with emphasis on increasing electronic connectivity, information dissemination and network building. The Committee requested more details on the 1998-1999 work programme, which the secretariat would draft once the new ECA organizational structure takes effect. The Committee recommended that an evaluation of products and services would be useful before elaborating future activities. It was also recommended that ECA reinforce its efforts to collect information on African experts in the fields covered by its programme on harnessing information for development so that it could engage African expertise as much as possible. The Committee discussed taking urgent actions to automate the ECA library and improve its services so that it could become a model automated library for member States.
176. In recognition of the paucity of information infrastructure in Africa, the Committee decided to bring the issue of "Information for all in Africa by the year 2010" to the level of the Conference of Ministers in 1998. For this purpose, a Subcommittee was established to elaborate guidelines on this subject. The Subcommittee was comprised of Gambia, Lesotho, Niger, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the East and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI), working with the Bureau of the Committee. PADIS would draft guidelines, which would include elements of regional co-operation, and send them to the Subcommittee for comment and revision by electronic means. They would then be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

177. The Committee makes the following recommendations which it requests the Conference to forward to the Conference of Ministers for adoption.

Recommendations:

The ninth Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Population and Information Specialists recommends that:

1. the Conference of Ministers endorse for use in member States and observer organisations the information standards adopted by the Standing Committee on Harmonization and Standardization on Information Systems in Africa on:

- Guidelines for e-mail and computer networking in Africa;
- Manual for Document Analysis (micro CDS/ISIS version);
- PADDEV automated computer programme for development of bibliographic data bases;
- PADDEV computerized programme for authority file development;
- Common format for African CD-ROM development; and
- ECASERV computer programme for data base searching via e-mail.

2. The standards adopted by the Standing Committee on Harmonization and Standardization on Information Systems in Africa be widely disseminated, by training information professionals in their use and by PADIS popularizing and disseminating them to its national, subregional and institutional participating centres, as well as to other centres of training and research in the African region involved in information production and dissemination.

3. As part of its new strategic focus area of Harnessing Information for Development, ECA should secure sufficient human and financial resources to enable the ECA library to automate its operations and improve its services in order to transform it into a model library for ECA member States to serve the region better; ECA should report on the progress made in this area to the next meeting of the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Population and Information Specialists.

4. PADIS should undertake necessary actions to strengthen its network, which should in turn utilize its own national and regional networks, to better disseminate information for development.

5. PADIS should include other centres of training and research in the Africa region involved in the production and dissemination of information for development, as well as information professionals, in the dissemination of its products and services and for the use of African expertise in carrying out its work programme.