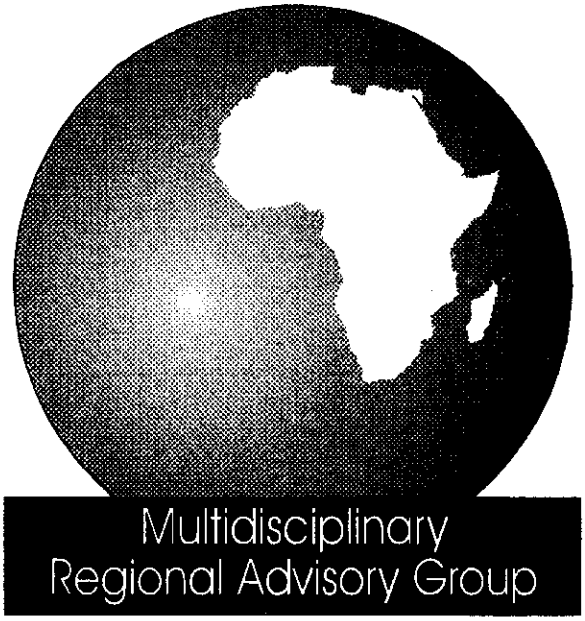
ECA/MRAG/96/92/MR

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY REGIONAL ADVISORY GROUP



REPORT OF MISSION TO CODESRIA

DAKAR, SENEGAL

By:

M.J. Balogun

Senior Regional Adviser

Addis Ababa
December, 1996

60 6

ECA/MRAG/96/92/MR

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY REGIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

REPORT OF MISSION TO CODESRIA
DAKAR, SENEGAL

By

M. J. Balogun
Senior Regional Adviser

Addis Ababa
December, 1996

Introduction

1. Between 26 and 30 October 1996, Mr M J Balogun, Senior Regional Adviser, undertook a mission to the headquarters of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (hereafter referred to as 'the Council' or CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal. In the course of the mission, he held discussions with the Executive Secretary and the professional staff of the Council on the possibility of formulating a project on the application of the analytical tools and competences of the social sciences to contemporary public policy and management problems in Africa. He also consulted secondary sources relevant to the mission terms of reference.

2. This report begins with the mission terms of reference as well as the methodology adopted in formulating the mission's conclusions and recommendations. It then proceeds to examine the rationale behind, and the assumptions underlying, the decision to develop a project strengthening the relationship between, on the one hand, public policy and its management, and, on the other, the various social science disciplines. The third part of the report focuses on the mandate of CODESRIA, and discusses its role and impact in integrating social science research with governance and economic management in Africa. The fourth and last part of the report discusses the main outline of a project aimed at enhancing the capacity of the public sector to optimise the benefits of social science research findings.

I. Mission Terms of Reference and Methodology

3. Between 26 and 30 October 1996, Mr M J Balogun, Senior Regional Adviser, undertook a mission to CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, with the following terms of reference:

(i) To examine and synthesise the data on CODESRIA's contributions to social science research, development studies and policy;

(ii) To examine the extent to which public policy and its implementation in the African context is aware of, and utilize, social science research results;

(iii) To examine the extent and nature of CODESRIA's work on governance, public sector management and civil service reform, with a view to promoting collaboration among three main institutions - CODESRIA, ECA, and AAPAM;

(iv) To propose a course of action focusing on the development and sustainability of relationships between, on the one hand, institutions engaged in social science research, and, on the other, those responsible for the formulation and implementation of public policy; and

(v) To identify the role of ECA, CODESRIA, and AAPAM in mobilising resources for, and implementing, the aforesaid project activities.

4. In response to the issues raised by the mission terms of reference, the regional adviser held discussions with the following individuals in CODESRIA:

(i) Dr Achille Mbembe
Executive Secretary, CODESRIA

(ii) Dr Tade Akin Aina
Deputy Executive Secretary (Publications)

(iii) Dr Dominique Njinkeu, Coordinator,
Research Network on Industrial Policies

(iv) M. Abou Moussa Ndongo, Chief Librarian

(v) Dr Remy Cofi Noumon, Coordinator
Education and Finance Research Network, and

(vi) Mrs. Ngone Diop Tine, Research Assistant (African Perspective to Structural Adjustment Programmes).

5. The regional adviser also consulted secondary sources outlining CODESRIA's role since its inception. These include the Council's annual reports, the Executive Secretary's reports to the General Assembly, back numbers of the CODESRIA Bulletin and Africa Development, working papers and monographs, as well as the CODESRIA Research Agenda 1997 - 2001. The regional adviser finds the last document (the 1997-2001 research agenda) particularly useful. By taking a strategic view of the role of the social sciences in contemporary Africa, the document anticipated the key issues to be addressed by the ECA mission.

6. At the end of the mission to CODESRIA, the regional adviser sought audience with government functionaries in different parts of the continent. This was meant to obtain, for whatever it was worth, the "practitioner's" reaction to the views expressed by CODESRIA staff on the interface between public policy and social science research. The regional adviser would like to express his gratitude not only to the Executive Secretary and staff of CODESRIA who facilitated the work of the mission, but also to all those who volunteered information on topics relating to the mission terms of reference.

II. Linking Public Policy with the Social Sciences: Rationale, Problems and Options

7. The need to integrate rational analytical methods into the government's policy making process was first articulated in Great Britain where the Haldane Committee on the Machinery of Government (1919) noted as follows:

> In the sphere of civil government the duty of investigation and thought, as preliminary to action, might with great advantage be more definitely recognized.

8. The Committee lamented the fact that up to the end of the First World War, adequate provision had not been made

> ...for the organized acquisition of facts and information, and for the systematic application of thought, as preliminary to the settlement of policy and its subsequent administration.

9. By nudging civil government in the direction of organized acquisition of facts prior to taking decisions on issues affecting the well-being of the people, the Haldane Committee was simply drawing on the experience of the military which rarely went to war without a strategy, or fought battles without fielding reconnaissance missions.

Public Policy, Social Science, and Contemporary Challenges

10. If the challenges facing contemporary government - particularly, those of economic growth, improved standards of living, political stability, and environmental protection - are equated with "wars", it is amazing how, at least, in the specific African situation, such challenges are approached in an off-handed manner. Full-scale offensives tend to be treated as mere skirmishes. Intuition replaces strategy, and wish lists substitute for well-researched battle plans. Opinions overwhelm facts, while hierarchy and power severely restrict the scope for the systematic application of knowledge to public policy and its implementation.

11. Policy makers in Africa are not alone in keeping their distance from "theoretical" policy analysts. It has been observed that up to the early 1970's, policy formulation in the British government rarely took advantage of research results (Adamolekun, 1981:169). It is only in recent years (particularly, from the Thatcher era) that the idea of analysing strategic options and undertaking "policy studies" caught on in the British civil service.

12. In any case, it can be easily understood why public policy lagged behind policy research in Great Britain. Besides being steeped in tradition, the British civil service was not the primary engine of economic growth. It was the private sector which invested in the key projects, and whose continued success hinged on the implementation of innovative and competitive strategies. It was therefore this (private) sector which stood to profit from the conduct of pure and experimental research in both the physical and the social sciences.

13. The situation in Africa is slightly different. Government was - and regardless of the efforts made towards "privatisation", still is - the major player on the socio-economic scene. It is thus beyond question that the fate of the typical African economy hangs on the capacity of government policy makers to adopt, and/or facilitate the implementation of, innovative and competitive strategies. And since such strategies do not simply happen, it behoves a government craving for economic success to develop strategic partnerships with institutions capable of undertaking the necessary investigative and policy analytic tasks. Unfortunately, the links between policy formation and policy research - especially, social science research - have not been very strong on the continent.

14. The protracted socio-economic crisis is an outcome of the persistent failure to apply rational scientific methods in tracking the root causes of the problems encountered by the average public house-hold and in outlining incrementally rational solutions. The economy, for instance, was, for over three decades, guided and controlled by central government agencies, but practically no effort was made to find out how public management practices impacted on resource allocation and accelerated the drift towards macro-economic instability. It was not until external financial institutions began to call in the "IOUs" that the policy makers and senior government officials got acquainted with - or at least, realized the import of - basic concepts like "structural imbalances", "trade and/or budget deficits", "currency devaluation", "market-testing", and "down-sizing".

15. In effect, therefore, SAP has underscored the importance of at least one social science discipline, i.e., economics. Technocrats in agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, the national planning office, and the central bank, now feel at ease when complex economic issues are being discussed with external policy advisers. This is, however, more than one can say for their colleagues operating at the SAP periphery, viz: the career officials who do not have to handle SAP-related subjects as part of their routine responsibilities. This category of officials - who incidentally constitute the majority - will be hard put to explain how the contemporary economic concepts relate to one another in a logical and holistic sense. The result of the inadequate domestic capacity

is the increasing dependence on external bodies for policy advice (Mutahaba, 1992:8).

16. The drift on the economic front is matched by the disarray in social policy. To correct imbalances in the economy, a number of African countries implemented stringent belt-tightening, structural adjustment programmes (SAP). The measures adopted include sharp reductions in the size of government, hefty devaluation of currency, privatisation of state enterprises, elimination of price controls and subsidies, and relaxation of bureaucratic controls.

17. While the precarious state of the economies left policy makers with little choice, the rapid reduction in public expenditure dealt the social and infrastructural sectors a serious blow. Among other things, the austerity measures led to a sharp decline in the resources allocated to education, health and medical services, and impaired the ability of government to provide the social safety nets badly needed by the poor, the aged, and the destitute, not to mention the increasing hordes of the able-bodied un-employed. The consequences of social distress for political stability and for civil order - as well as for economic growth - have not been fully estimated. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude that the gravity of the post-SAP social situation is yet to be sufficiently acknowledged in official government circles to trigger interest in a systematic analysis of the situation prior to the formulation of the appropriate response measures.

18. Yet, the situation cannot be ignored indefinitely. The crisis in education - particularly, higher education - warrants a careful scrutiny of diverse but inter-related factors. At the very least, the crisis entails a critical examination of the policy governing the structure, content and methodology of learning, the enrolment of students, the mobilisation of resources, the funding and management of institutions, and the career paths open to the graduates of the school system.

19. Besides education, many other policy issues are likely to respond to rational, analytic interventions. Examples are the costs and benefits of investments in the decaying health and medical facilities, strategies for ameliorating the conditions of the growing refugee and destitute populations and enhancing their productive capacity, options and priorities in the renewal and rehabilitation of the over-strained public utilities and infrastructure services (like water, electricity, rural and urban highways), and how to achieve growth targets in agriculture, industry, energy and minerals exploration - without upsetting the ecological balance or triggering environmental disasters.

20. There is no doubt that in tackling some of the preceding problems, African governments have commissioned studies highlighting the critical issues and proffering solutions. However, more often than not, such studies tend to be undertaken at the urging of foreign donor institutions, and are likely to be "firmed out" to foreign consultants. The extent to which the outputs of the studies inform the design and implementation of public policy is itself open to debate.

21. It is not only in the formulation of policy that civil government has failed to take advantage "organised acquisition of facts" and of "systematic application of thought". Like the political decision makers, the executors of public policy (the career civil servants) are yet to demonstrate a keen awareness of the benefits to be derived from the constant application of the scientific method to the field of administration and management. So it is that even purely technical issues (such as those of administrative reform, restructuring and reorganisation, human resource planning/budgeting, employee supervision, morale and productivity) tend to be inexonerably tied to partisan or "administrative" politics, or resolved with the management practitioner's cure-all, "time-tested" methods.

22. There is no doubt that the challenges facing Africa in the area of governance and economic management would be more easily met if the resources made available by the social sciences are fully tapped. In any case, governance, by definition, implies the homogenization of the analytical competences of the basic policy sciences (Balogun, 1983:282).

23. Recent experiences in institution reform and revitalisation in different parts of Africa point to the enormous benefits derivable from the enlistment of social science research methodology in the service of public management. As reported by Dodoo (1996:27-29) Ghana's efforts at enhancing the programme delivery capacity of the civil service began to bear fruit only when the country's civil service reform agenda incorporated elements making it possible to gauge the opinions of government officials on reform priorities. The "self-appraisal" instruments designed and administered in collaboration with the various stake-holders enabled the managers of the reform programme to obtain the reactions of the various cadres to the problems facing the civil service and how to go about tackling them.

24. In much the same way, the Ugandan government's attempts at fostering a "customer-orientation" in the civil service, and at making the service accountable and responsive explain the attention accorded, under the on-going reform programme, to client evaluation of the delivery capacity of public agencies, and to the enhancement of civil service morale (Kyarimpa, 1996:15-18). Whether in carrying out "customer surveys" or in identifying factors in civil

service morale and productivity, the coordinators of the reform programme are likely to find the analytical and empirical tools of social science indispensable. Afterall, as noted by Lupton (1972), the underlying assumption of contemporary social science is that:

> "there are regularities in social life which may be observed, just as there are regularities in the physical world which are the concern of the so-called physical sciences."

Bridging the Policy/Analytic Gap

25. While the role of social science in the policy process is being gradually acknowledged, a big gulf still separates public policy from policy research. Narrowing the gap requires a clear understanding of the factors shaping the two functions' relationship with each other. At least three factors can be readily mentioned, viz: the "under-developed" nature of indigenous social science, the political and the academic elites' mutual distrust and suspicion of each other, and the frequent break-down in communication.

26. One possible explanation for the limited impact of social science on public policy is the general perception of African social scientists as intellectual "trading-post" agents. Ake (1980) aptly sums up the position of the "dependency" school when he detects hints of intellectual imperialism in the overwhelming influence exerted by western concepts and methodology on African social science scholars. The frequent tendency of local social scientists to see Africa through foreign (i.e. western and the former Soviet communist) looking-glasses also prompted Balogun (1981:160) to high-light the value-orientation of social science:

> "To assume a value-free social science, as we have done all along, is to accept other societies' interpretations of events in our own world."

27. The thrust of the "dependency" argument, however, runs counter to the underlying universalist assumption of contemporary social science. Indeed, if social science knowledge can be acquired through observation, and considering that the results of observations undertaken elsewhere is within reach, what is the point in undertaking culture-specific research? It will amount to gross devaluation of scholarship to bow to diverse cultural demands in the face of overwhelming evidence pointing to universal "truths" in any particular area of knowledge. This is the position taken by the critics of the dependency theory on subjects like development, democracy, human rights, privatisation, "lean and efficient" civil service, and balanced budgets.

28. Excessive dependence on the models and theories tested outside Africa nonetheless runs the risk of discouraging seminal contributions in the field of social science and ignoring the objective conditions prevailing within the continent. Either way, the reputation and influence of the indigenous social scientists are likely to be undermined. Until the social scientist is seen to be interested in deploying his/her analytical capacity towards meeting some pressing social need, s/he is not likely to be accepted by the policy maker as a dependable ally in confronting the challenges of nation building.

29. The "stand-offish" attitude of the academic may also feed old prejudices. Even at the best of times, the policy maker and the academic frequently view each other with distrust. The former is apt to regard the latter at best, as a "mere" theoretician with virtually no idea of what it takes to run a country, and at worst, as a political opponent masquerading as a policy analyst. The policy maker's suspicion of the academic deepens where the latter specialises in an area (e.g., political science and political economy) deemed capable of fomenting political agitation.

30. The social scientist's usual response to the perceived hostility of the ruling class is to keep his/her distance from the policies and programmes bearing the imprint of the class. The retreat to the "ivory tower" takes either of two forms. First, the social scientist shows little or no inclination to participate in policy-oriented research, preferring the secluded atmosphere of the university campus. Secondly, s/he compensates for lack of involvement in policy studies by undertaking basic (pure academic) research, and publishing the results in journals to which only the academically inclined subscribe. If s/he is an economist, the breach with the officialdom is made complete by the highly technical (most frequently, mathematical) language used by the social scientist in communicating with academic peers.

31. In general, the future of the relationship between public policy and social science research depends to a large extent on how the conflicting demands on the latter (social science research) are resolved. Mbembe (1993) for one sees the African social scientist being pulled in two different directions - one global or universalist, the other Afro-centric. The global challenge, according to him is to

> "...end the 'ghettoization' of the Africa's discourse on Africa, therefore, to contribute to the development of social theory <u>in general</u>, and to ensure the return of Africa to the field of comparative analysis. The challenge involves also striking the balance between the demands of <u>action-oriented</u> research and those of (pure) theoretical research...."

32. It is against this background - one against which efforts are made to reconcile the social scientist's global and internal African obligations - that the role of CODESRIA is examined in the next section.

III. The Role and Impact of CODESRIA

33. The Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (better known by its acronym, CODESRIA) was established in 1973 with the following objectives:

(a) To develop the social sciences in Africa by mobilising the African social science community to undertake fundamental as well as problem-oriented research from a perspective which is more relevant to the needs of the African people;

(b) To develop scientifically a comparative and a continued perspective expressing the specificity of the development process in Africa;

(c) To promote cooperation and collaboration among African universities, research and training institutes as well as professional associations;

(d) To promote the publication and the distribution of the results of research undertaken by African researchers;

(e) To promote and defend the principle of independent thought and research, and the liberty of researchers.

CODESRIA Organisation Structure

34. At the apex of the CODESRIA structure if the General Assembly comprising social science research institutes and university faculties which are full members of the Council. Besides providing general policy guidance, the Assembly determines the Council's programme priorities, and receives periodic reports on implementation.

35. Directly accountable to the General Assembly is the Executive Committee which the Assembly elects for a 3-year term. It is made up of renowned social scientists, and it meets once a year to appoint top professional staff of CODESRIA, review the organisation's activities, appoint committees, and submit reports to the General Assembly.

36. The implementation of the Council's work programme is the responsibility of the Secretariat which is headed by the Executive Secretary. Under the Executive Secretary's day-to-day

supervision, the Secretariat carries out programmed activities, and prepares reports as required by the Executive Committee and/or the General Assembly.

CODESRIA Activities

37. CODESRIA does not by itself undertake research. Its role is essentially that of encouraging, backstopping, and coordinating social science research. Its membership structure also enables it to carry out vital information sharing and net-working activities. Among the functions performed by the Council are:

* sponsorship of comparative, inter-disciplinary research both at the continental and national levels;

* publication of social science research findings;

* support towards the training of African social scientists - particularly, training in the methodology and techniques of economic analysis, as well as in econometric and computation techniques;

* documentation and retrieval of information;

* development of awareness among researchers and policy makers about major critical issues of direct concern to Africa;

* collaboration with, and support to, other non-governmental social science organizations operating at the regional or sub-regional levels;

* maintaining and sustaining net-working links with institutions such as the Inter-regional Coordinating Committee of Development Associations (ICCDA), and those within the U.N. system, and developing bilateral relations with individual research institutes in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North and Latin America, and the Caribbean.

38. CODESRIA's role in the areas of networking, documentation, publication, and research funding, deserves special recognition. As part of its networking arrangements, the Council launched a number of research networks, e.g. the Research Network on Industrial Policies and Sectoral Incentives (March 1989), the Network on Finance and Education, and the Multi-national Working Groups. While the first two (the Research Network on Industrial Policies and Sectoral Incentives and the Network on Finance and Education) focus on issues having direct bearing on public policy, the last (the Multi-national Working Groups) examine themes which coincide with the research interests of members. A brief

assessment of the outputs of each sub-programme follows in the subsequent paragraphs.

Networking Role

39. The Research Network on Industrial Policies and Sectoral Incentives comprises 40 researchers from 9 Francophone countries of West and Central Africa. It was established in March 1989 with a view to:

(i) reinforcing economic analysis and research capacity, as well as the ability to formulate economic policy in the participating countries; and

(ii) assisting research teams to carry out applied economic studies, particularly, studies falling under the industrial development theme.

40. The Network produced a number of reports some of which were subsequently published as monographs. Among the published reports are:

"The Single Tax System and Economic Cooperation within the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa, UDEAC", by Bela Lazare;

"The Analysis of Industrial Protection and Incentives in Niger" (J. Lama, A.H. Maman, Ali Woba, and A. Assogba);

"Industrial Protection and Incentive Systems in Senegal Under the New Industrial Policy", (B. Fall, A. Toure, A. Lom, and B. Wada); and

"Industrial Policies and Incentives in Burkina Faso", (F. Kabore and Mady Koanda).

41. The Network on Finance and Education was funded by Donors in African Education (DAE). It was inaugurated in 1995. Its objectives are to:

(a) enhance the capacity of the Ministries of Education in managing scarce resources;

(b) develop the capacity of the Ministries of Education to negotiate and maintain cordial relations with the Ministries of Finance, particularly, at the budget formulation and resource allocation stages;

(c) enhance the capacity of the Ministries of Education to mobilize extra-budgetary resources, i.e. resources external to the exchequer;

(d) create within CODESRIA a forum for information sharing on education and finance; and

(e) compile case studies of best practices in education finance for dissemination at training workshops and to policy makers.

42. The Finance and Education Network has yet to record any substantial achievements. It was, at the time of the ECA mission, at the stage constituting Working Groups which would, in close consultation with the Ministries of Education, focus on problems facing the different levels of education prior to recommending appropriate remedial measures.

43. Perhaps after acquiring sufficient expertise in the area of education finance, the Network would be in a position to sponsor studies outlining strategic options in education policy and finance or responding to specific policy need. An example of the latter type of task is that entrusted to a 25-member Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Nigeria inaugurated by the Head of State, General Sani Abacha, in Abuja on 31 October 1996. The Committee's terms of reference are to:

* Explore ways in which the hands of University administrators can be strengthened to discharge their duties effectively;

* review the entire Nigerian educational system and identify areas of duplication of courses, facilities and institutions and make detailed recommendations for rationalising the system, including optimising the utilization of research resources to meet national needs;

* examine the relevant provision in the 1995 draft Constitution relating to education and make appropriate recommendations on the devolution of powers;

* determine the adequacy or otherwise of the facilities available to meet the needs of the courses which the Committee recommends;

* examine sources, modalities and adequacy of funding of education at all levels and the possibility of free education;

* re-examine and advise on access to education generally and the essence of modern university developments and also make appropriate recommendations;

* look into administrative policies, growth rate, scholarship, loans, and bursary schemes;

* examine the practice of trade unionism in the education sector in relation to existing laws and make recommendations;

* look into the incidence of secret cults and drug abuse among students in the higher institutions;

* examine the possibility of introducing terminal system in the appointment of lecturers in higher institutions;

* examine the desirability or otherwise of allowing privileged universities to exist side by side with "public universities"; and

* examine all the issues which obstruct **efficient educational delivery** and recommend how to deal with them.

44. CODESRIA's education and finance network still has a long way to go to be able to handle a complex project like the above-mentioned one from Nigeria - a project which calls for a multi-disciplinary approach to policy analysis. This is not to say that multi-disciplinary research is foreign to CODESRIA. In fact, through the Multi-national Working Groups, the Council constitutes multi-disciplinary teams to examine themes ranging from ethnicity and democratization, through gender studies, to the impact of the military and militarism on governance. The Working Groups' research results have also been published as "green books", e.g.

* "The Cultural Question in Africa: Contexts, Issues and Research Perspectives", (S. Bachir Diagne and Henri Ossebi); and

* "Gender Research and Women's Studies in Africa during the 1990's" (Amina Mama).

Documentation & Information

45. Complementing CODESRIA's networking activities and of direct relevance to the ECA's new Strategic Directions are the services provided through the documentation and information centre (CODICE) which was established in 1983. The centre's clients include CODESRIA staff members and researchers as well as researchers and students in local and foreign institutions.

46. CODICE is linked to information and documentation centres such as IDIN (International Development Information Network), PADIS (Pan African Development Information System), and HURIDOCS (Human Rights Information and Documentation System.

47. Among the data bases maintained by CODICE are the following:

- bibliographic data base
- data base of African social scientists
- data base of African research and training institutes
- data base of on-going projects in Africa

CODICE has also acquired a number of CD-ROM data bases, viz:

- the index to international economic development and finance
- CAB Abstracts (International Agricultural Research)
- Books in Print Plus
- Socio-file
- Tropag and Rural (Abstract of Tropical Agriculture and Rural Development)
- Bibliographie Nationale Francaise
- DAI CD-ROM (Development Activity Information)
- Wilsondisc; Soc. Science Index
- Wilsondisc; Humanities Index
- PAIS (Public Affairs Information Service).

48. The CODICE computing capacity, however, needs to be upgraded. Of the 5 computers installed, only one (a Pentium 90) is powerful enough to be used for E-mail connection, Internet access and Web browsing. The others (IBM PS2, IBM 386, and DELL 368) cannot accommodate the latest soft-wares. Five (5) softwares are constantly applied, i.e. an information retrieval software micro CDS-ISIS developed by UNESCO, Word Microsoft, DBASE IV, PROCOMM, and NOVELL (a LAN programme).

Publication

49. CODESRIA has made tremendous strides in the field of publications. Besides the full-length text-books published under its auspices (at least three of the books have to-date received international merit awards), the Council produces the following:

(i) Africa Development - the 'flagship' publication and bi-lingual journal with an average print-run of 1,000 copies. Its target readership is the African social science research community;

(ii) The CODESRIA Bulletin - a widely read bi-lingual newsletter providing information on the Council's activities, and featuring "debates", viewpoints and exchanges;

(iii) Afrika Zamani- a journal of the African Association of Historians, supported by CODESRIA since 1992;

(iv) Working papers (research papers submitted on different topics, otherwise referred to as Green Books); and

(v) Monographs.

50. The Council encounters problems in marketing and distributing its publications. According to CODESRIA, this is due to the "massive devaluation of national currencies and the outrageous declines in salaries (which) have virtually obliterated the Africa markets for academic books." The Council sends free copies of its publications to all member institutes and key libraries, while selling the remaining copies to book-stores at subsidized prices.

Funding of, and support to, Research Activities

51. The last major task undertaken by CODESRIA consists of extending financial support to researchers. An example is the "Reflection on Development" programme formerly sponsored and financed by Rockefeller Foundation. Under the programme, renowned social scientists were given financial assistance to undertake in-depth examination of specific development themes as visiting fellows in universities or research institutes.

52. CODESRIA also coordinates a Thesis Writing programme which enables Masters and Ph.D candidates to compete for, and if successful to utilize, research grants.

53. Finally, between June and August every year, the Council organises 2 Institutes in Dakar at which approximately 15 researchers deliberate on different themes (e.g. Democratic Governance in Africa, Gender, and Decentralisation).

CODESRIA's Strategic Plan 1997-2001

53. While CODESRIA has made tremendous progress since its establishment in 1973, its research focus would appear to need sharpening, and its contributions to the evolution and refinement of public policy are still marginal. Responding to this dual challenge - the challenge of defining its place in the general field of social science, and of harnessing theoretical knowledge to serve public policy ends - is the goal outlined in the 1997-2001 strategic plan.

54. The plan begins by tracking the developments taking place in Africa and world-wide. Some of these developments are positive, signalling opportunities to be explored. Others are negative in the sense that they constitute threats not just to traditional ways of life but to human well-being. While alluding to the factors accounting for institution decay and state collapse, the plan accentuates the positive by focusing on areas where social science research could achieve maximum impact:

> "Africa is experiencing an extraordinary period of social economic and cultural experimentation in which power systems and the geography of production are being reshuffled....A complex cultural and economic mosaic is emerging. New regional markets are expanding and are reshaping the frontiers and collective life in ways unimagined before."

55. Instead of succumbing to Afro-pessimism, the plan deems it wise for African social scientists to take a pro-active view of the momentous changes occurring within Africa and without:

> "More than ever before, we need a new descriptive and interpretative agenda, new ways of seeing our realities, new categories to express our possibilities, new languages to describe ourselves."

56. In recognition of the need for a sharpened research focus and bearing in mind the changes taking place in Africa and globally, the 1997-2001 research agenda will, according to the plan, examine issues under three main headings, viz: **Africa in the Global Economy**, **States, Territories and Resources**, and **Democracy and Civil Society**. The issues to be explored under each heading are as follows:

Module 1: Africa in the Global Economy

* African Economies and the GATT Agreements (Uruguay Rounds)
* Regional Integration in Africa
* South Africa within Africa
* Currency and Inflation
* Africa and the Asian Models.

Module 2: States, Territories and Resources

* The Economics of Raw Materials: the Case of Oil and Minerals
* Coastal and Island Economies
* Saharan Ecosystems: Integration and Marginalisation

* Marginal Regions (regions in which the state is unable to assert its authority or guarantee cohabitation between rival communities)
* The Major River Basins
* Agro-Forestry Systems
* African Highlands: Persistence, Conflict and Change

Module 3: Democracy and Civil Society

* Popular Religions, Urban Cultures and New Identity Struggles
* Property, Security and Public Order
* Sociology and Anthropology of Elections
* States and Taxation
* Migration and Citizenship
* Gender, Sexuality and the Economics of Social Reproduction.

57. In addition to promoting synergy in the area of basic research, the strategic plan addresses contemporary policy concerns. Under the plan, policy-oriented research is expected to be undertaken focusing on:

* Health Sector Reforms
* Globalisation and Social Policy
* Education and Finance
* Prices, Credit Markets and Rural Finance
* Industrial Policy

58. The last category of activities to be carried out by CODESRIA during the 1997-2001 plan period seeks to build on the previous achievements in the area of training. Besides implementing a grants programme targeted at masters and doctoral candidates, the Council will organise methodological workshops aimed at enhancing the data collection and analytic capacity of social scientists, and exposing them to new developments in the natural sciences, theory and epistemology, and computer (soft-ware) applications.

59. In general, therefore, CODESRIA is moving in a direction most likely to facilitate collaboration with the ECA, and AAPAM. The next section explores areas in which the three institutions can work together in support of public policy endeavours in Africa, in addition to outlining the modalities for establishing and sustaining the partnership.

IV. Enhancing Policy Analytic and Implementation Capacity: The Role of ECA, CODESRIA and AAPAM

60. By seeking to promote synergy among the three critical elements in social science research - i.e. methodology, theory, and data - CODESRIA has strategically positioned itself to extend the

horizon of knowledge in the field, and to enhance the capacity for policy formulation and implementation on the African continent. In embarking on the new mission, CODESRIA will find ready allies in the ECA, which has recently launched its new Strategic Directions targeted at the development problems facing its member States, and the African Association for Public Administration and Management which has a track record in public sector management improvement and institutional capacity building.

61. To begin with, CODESRIA's programme of basic and applied/ policy-oriented research complements the activities planned by the ECA under its new Strategic Directions - particularly, those in the priority and cross-cutting areas. The outputs of the Council's seminal and empirical research are likely to prove useful as inputs into the Commission's programming and implementation activities in the field.

62. While CODESRIA's contributions to public sector management improvement are still modest, by collaborating with AAPAM, it is possible for the former to bring the benefits of social science knowledge to the work-place. The nature of, and modalities for, CODESRIA/ECA/AAPAM collaboration are explored in the subsequent paragraphs.

ECA and CODESRIA

63. At its meeting held in Addis Ababa in May 1996, the ECA Conference of Ministers approved a new policy document entitled Serving Africa Better in the 21st century - ECA's Strategic Directions. The document outlines five priority programmes (viz: development policy analysis, food security and poverty alleviation, regional cooperation and integration, development management, and information services for development) as well as two cross-cutting issues (women empowerment and capacity building).

64. In implementing these programmes, the ECA will have to rely on the socio-economic analyses undertaken internally by the ECA staff, and externally by institutions like CODESRIA. The latter's planned activities under Module 1 (Africa in the Global Economy) and Module 2 (States, Territories and Resources) are consistent with, and relevant to, the broad thrusts of ECA's Strategic Directions.

65. It is also gratifying to note that just as the ECA has attached much importance to the acquisition and application of modern information technology, CODESRIA (through CODICE) is in the process of upgrading its own facilities. It is a matter of time before the two institutions begin to optimise the benefits of the networking arrangements promised by the investment in communication access and inter-connectivity.

V. ECA, CODESRIA and AAPAM: Modalities for future Collaboration

66. The preceding sections point to the potential benefits of collaboration among the three institutions (viz: ECA, CODESRIA, and AAPAM). However, in view of the policy implications of the projected links, it is essential that the Management of the three institutions decide first and foremost whether the idea of collaboration is acceptable in principle. With specific reference to the ECA (which fielded and financed this mission), the implications of collaboration for the Commission's programming and implementation activities would have to be carefully considered by the Programme, Planning, Finance and Evaluation Division - the unit responsible for the activities. This is also undoubtedly the case with CODESRIA and AAPAM which would need to identify areas in which they wish to collaborate with each other and with the ECA.

67. Without prejudice to the decision taken by the three institutions on the way forward, it is possible to mention at least three types of activities around which projects might be designed, viz:

(a) Networking: exchange of information on best practices in public policy formulation and implementation and the contributions of social science research to the policy process. Establishment and inter-change of data bases on macro-economic and sectoral policies. Collaboration on the design and application of public policy management soft-wares.

(b) Capacity building: design and conduct of joint training programmes - especially, research methodology, computer applications, and policy analysis training programmes.

(c) Multi-disciplinary Missions: Identification of resource persons to participate in multi-disciplinary advisory and training missions requested by member-States, inter-governmental organisations, regional and sub-regional economic communities, and donor agencies.

68. One way of moving ahead with the proposal for collaboration is to solicit the reactions of the three institutions (ECA, CODESRIA, and AAPAM) to the issues raised in the preceding paragraphs. If the consensus is towards working together, the process can be taken a step further - which is constituting a Working Group, made up of the three institutions's representatives. The Working Group's terms of reference will be to:

(i) prepare and agree on a memorandum of understanding;

(ii) identify areas of collaboration and commission the preparation of projects to be jointly implemented within a given period;

(iii) deliberate on resource mobilisation options and strategies; and

(iv) agree on project monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

69. The date and venue of the Working Group's meeting will depend on the response from each of the participating institutions.