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THE AFRICAN POPULATION PROGRAMME

M70-3094

## THE AFRICAN POPULATION PROGRAMME

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The General Assembly, in its unanimously adopted resolution 2211(XXI), called upon the regional economic commissions and other bodies to develop and strengthen regional and national facilities "for training, research, information and advisory services in the field of population, bearing in mind the different character of population problems in each country and region and the needs arising therefrom". The importance of strengthening population work at the regional level was further emphasized during the discussions of the 43rd session of the Economic and Social Council in 1967 when the Secretary-General informed the Council of the establishment of a Trust Fund for population activities aimed at expanding on a global scale the commitment of the United Nations in respect of population work. The Trust Fund (now called, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and administered by the United Nations Development Programme) as envisaged in the Secretary-General's proposals, was to be largely devoted to the development of regional and national facilities. These proposals, together with ECOSOC resolutions 1279 (XLIII) and 1347(XLV), which urge all organizations within the United Nations system to make every effort within their competence to develop and render more effective their programmes in the field of population and call upon the regional economic commissions to report on population aspects of economic and social development, set the stage for a fresh assessment of individual regional population programmes.

2. Population work at the regional level began in the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in 1961, and was strengthened with the establishment of a Demographic Section in 1964. An African Population Programme has been developed over time in consultation with United Nations Headquarters, especially from late in 1966. Proposals for expanded work in population (including the organization of an African Population Conference) were placed before the Fifth Conference of African Statisticians in 1967 and were endorsed in principle.<sup>1/</sup> In 1968, a Population Programming Mission for Africa was set up by the United Nations in order to advise the Secretary-General on the direction in which expanded activities could best be developed for the benefit of the countries of the region. The report of the Mission<sup>2/</sup> was

1/ Report of the Fifth Conference of African Statisticians, 1967 (E/CN.14/CAS.5/23)

2/ Report of the United Nations Population Programming Mission for Africa, (E/CN.14/INF/32; ST/SOA/SER.R/8).

discussed by the Ninth Session of the ECA, and the work programme for 1969-71, which took into account the Mission's recommendations<sup>1/</sup>, was also approved by the Commission.

3. With these directives, the African Population Programme was finalized in March-April 1969 in co-ordination with United Nations Headquarters. This programme took into account the regional character of population problems, and is of a somewhat smaller dimension than the Asian Population Programme. The Programme became operationally effective with effect from 1 September 1969 when funds were allotted from the UN Fund for Population activities.

4. The Sixth Conference of African Statisticians, meeting in October 1969, endorsed the Programme and suggested some specific areas of population studies; it also recommended that a Division be created at the ECA Secretariat, responsible to the Executive Secretary, for the effective implementation of the Programme.<sup>2/</sup>

5. As from 1 January 1970, a Population Programme Centre has been established at the Secretariat, directly responsible to the Executive Secretary. Opening the First-session of the ECA Technical Committee of Experts, 10-14 February 1970, the Executive Secretary described the present functions and responsibility of the Centre as follows: "The tasks of this Centre seem to me at this initial stage to comprise creating awareness of the population situation in Africa; helping governments to set up offices for handling population problems, training personnel for such offices and assisting governments, at their request, in their formulation of population policies."

6. The Technical Committee, recognizing "the immense responsibility for the quality of human life in future generations" (in the words of the Secretary General of the United Nations) in all its aspects, gave further thrust to the African Population Programme<sup>3/</sup> by identifying specific areas of population research, and action.<sup>3/</sup>

7. The following programme includes the recommendations of the Technical Committee of Experts (1970) the Conference of African Statisticians (1967 and 1969), the Seminar on Application of Demographic

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1/ Budgetary Requirements of the ECA Programme of Work and Priorities, 1969-1971 (E/CN.14/441).

2/ Report of the Sixth Session of the Conference of African Statisticians 1967 (E/CN.14/A56/27).

3/ Report of the First Meeting of the Technical Committee of Experts (E/CN.14/474).

Data and Analysis to Development Planning (1969), and the Working Group on Fertility Studies and Evaluation of Population Programmes (1970) and the Expert Group on Population (1970) the forerunner of the Conference of African Demographers a new standing body of the Commission.

8. To operate the African Population Programme, the Population Programme Centre comprises now three substantive sections on "General Demography" "Fertility Studies and Population Programmes and Policies"; a third section on "Development and Training" is proposed to be established shortly and will include the Information Service and Clearing House Unit, currently responsible directly to the Director of the Centre. The Centre has had recently the benefit of the advice of the United Nations Administrative Management Survey Review Team in the organization of its administrative operations.

9. Interest in population problems among African Governments is of very recent date. During the late 1950s and the 1960s, nation-wide population surveys were taken in all but two African countries nevertheless, the registration of vital statistics continues to be deficient. The development of demographic statistics in Africa has been undertaken mostly by the regional advisers in this field. Most countries of the region lack national facilities for demographic studies and training; consequently there are in general no proper studies of population trends and structure and their implications for economic and social development. A recent hopeful feature in the region has been the adoption of national population programmes in six countries and the fact that a large number of other Governments permit non-governmental organizations to operate family planning activities and in some cases provide facilities: the population of these countries represents over two-thirds of the total population of Africa.

10. The problems relating to the general inadequacy of the public infrastructures to meet the growing needs of the population in urban areas and for education and employment have received attention in a number of African development plans such as those in Kenya, Tunisia, Mauritius, Morocco, Ghana, Madagascar, Congo (Kinshasa), Congo (Brazzaville), Ivory Coast, Gabon, Sudan, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Central African Republic, Togo and Uganda.

11. In view of all these considerations, therefore, the United Nations African Population Programme is being geared to meet the direct needs of the countries of the region with respect to demographic analysis, the study of the relationship between population trends and economic and social development, studies of population policies which arise from these trends and the training of personnel for the countries.

12. The United Nations Population Programme in Africa was begun much later than those in other regions and, therefore, is lagging behind. Countries in other regions are also in a better position with regard to national facilities for research, training, and operational activities. Rapid expansion of the African programme is therefore called for, so that it may reach a level comparable with that of the other regions and so that African countries may be provided with services in those fields where their needs are most immediate and acute. The African programme outlined here should, therefore be viewed as a minimum work programme. If more funds and staff resources become available, it should be possible to undertake additional projects in the region.

13. The ECA secretariat has worked in the designated population fields of studies, training, technical meetings, and assistance to Governments, but because of a lack of staff, much of the work has been of an ad hoc nature, rather than planned on a long-term basis.

14. The regional centre for demographic training and research in Cairo, United Arab Republic, has provided training and research facilities for the countries of North Africa and the Middle East since 1963. It is anticipated that these activities will be strengthened and expanded to meet the needs of Governments of the region. Agreement has already been reached with the governments of Cameroon and Ghana for the establishment of the new UN sponsored regional training and research centres to serve the French- and English-speaking countries respectively South of the Sahara. These two new centres are to become operational in 1971.

15. Through the generous assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities which now provides the bulk of the funds for population work at the ECA Secretariat, the Population Programme Centre has, as from January 1971, an establishment of 12 professional secretariat staff supported by 3 research assistants and 2 regional advisers. This means addition of 3 professional posts in 1971 to the previous establishment. Of the 14 professional posts (12 secretarial and 2 regional advisers) 7 have been filled. It is hoped that three of the vacancies would be filled during the first quarter of 1971 and the remainder by the end of the year. Although this is a considerable improvement over the staffing situation prior to the establishment of the Centre, there is still an urgent need for an increase in staff to carry out all the projects outlined in the work programme; it is expected that this need will be fulfilled shortly.

16. The programme outlined here is regional; it is not possible of course, to formulate specific country project proposals. Suggestions have been made, however, by the United Nations Population Programming Mission for Africa, and requests are beginning to come from Governments for experts and other assistance for their population programmes. It is anticipated that the ECA programme, particularly regional advisory services and technical meetings, in close collaboration with the work of the Population Programme Officers, will help countries both to be better informed about the United Nations resources directly available to them from the UN Fund for Population Activities and to avail themselves of these resources in a more efficient manner.

17. All related ECA staff services, including the regional advisers on social development and public administration, will be used in implementing the proposed expanded programme.

#### Regional Co-ordination among the UN Organs

18. The crucial importance for co-ordination of population programmes is well recognized. The co-ordination between the United Nations organs is being effected through the Sub-committee on Population of the United Nations Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the Inter-agency Consultative Committee of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Such co-ordination at the regional level is being organized in pursuance of Resolution 187 (IX) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa which requested the Executive Secretary, as a special feature of the activities for the second United Nations Development Decade, inter alia, "to make specific measures to ensure the co-operation of the United Nations system of Specialized Agencies in the implementation of the work programmes approved by the Commission and, towards this end, to seek as far as possible, to have joint work programmes with individual agencies in their respective areas of competence", and also as a followup to the Sessions of the ACC Sub-Committee on Population.

19. Within the United Nations, the ECA Population Programme Centre is guided by the substantive office, namely, the Population Division. It also works in collaboration with the Population Programme Officers stationed in various parts of Africa. The first regional UN Inter-Agency Meeting on Population is to review the activities in the different aspects of population programmes such as research and studies (including demographic projections) information services, technical co-operation, training and conferences. And it is hoped that recognizing the competence of the United Nations Organs in their respective fields, the procedure of co-ordination, that has been so effective at Headquarters levels, would also start to operate in this region. Constructive, collaborative links have already been established by the ECA Population Programme Centre with the counterpart offices of a number of UN organs and this should be increasingly enlarged to cover, all the United Nations organs. It is proposed that this meeting, to be effective, should meet annually.

#### Regional Co-ordination and Collaboration with Non-UN Organizations

20. A number of Inter-governmental organizations in Africa and outside, non-African governments and non-governmental organizations are also interested in population programmes in the region, and there has been a growing recognition all around of the importance of collaboration between these organizations. The ECA cannot claim to co-ordinate these

activities but it would provide a forum to them to exchange information on their work-programmes in population and related fields, in order to evolve a method of collaboration which will make for a more rational use of resources available for work in these fields within the region.

21. There is no doubt that Africa needs all the necessary aid it can obtain to help in research as well as action programmes in the field of population. Such aid would be indispensable in implementing country programmes and could most valuably supplement the regional programmes of the United Nations, which are necessarily limited. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that these benefits, even in a nucleus form, are spread over as many African countries as possible, and not concentrated only in a few countries especially because the "demonstration effect" does not always permeate through national boundaries in the population field.

22. It is hoped that the meeting of Non-UN Organization interested in population programmes in Africa will be held annually and come out with constructive suggestions for collaboration between them in the field of population.

## II. FUNCTIONS

23. The Population Programme Centre of the ECA Secretariat should intensify the following functions:

(a) Preparation of studies and reports on population size composition and trends as well as on demographic aspects of economic and social development required by the Economic Commission for Africa;

(b) Collaboration with and assistance to the various branches of the ECA secretariat in providing information required on population trends and interrelationships between population and economic and social factors;

(c) Provision of advisory services through regional advisers and the demographic staff, at the request of Governments, in all fields of population;

(d) Assistance to Governments, on request, in organizing training, research and operational programmes in all fields of population;

(e) Provision of information on population and preparation of manuals and other publications for use of member Governments and institutions;

(f) Promotion of training and research through regional or sub-regional centres;

(g) Initiation of co-ordination and collaboration on population questions with the specialized agencies concerned and with internationally oriented governmental and non-governmental organizations at the regional level and

(h) Organization of regional conferences, seminars, expert groups and study-tours on population.

24. The problems of the development of demographic statistics in the region are dealt with by the Research and Statistics Division of the Secretariat in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the UN and in co-ordination with the Statistics Divisions of the UN specialized agencies: such development is a major premise to the expanded population programme.

### III. PROGRAMME OF WORK 1971-1976

#### A. BROAD ISSUES AND TECHNIQUES RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT

25. 91.00 Development trends and projections of development requirements and possibilities

#### Origin:

General Assembly resolution 2211(XXI), ECOSOC resolution 1347(XLV), Ninth session the Commission (Report, E/4651, Paras. 517-524), Sixth Conference of African Statisticians (Report); Expert Group on Population (Report).

#### Project aim:

To assist governments of the region to improve their information services on population questions and to give due recognition to the inter-relationship between population dynamics and economic and social growth.

#### Priority A

#### Work content:

(a) Assistance to governments (1971-1976)

(i) In defining the interrelation between population trends and socio-economic development;

(ii) In evaluating and adjusting data, preparing studies, and conducting research for the region as a whole, especially countries that do not have requisite personnel;

(iii) By participating and assisting in national seminars and other technical meetings on various aspects of population problems

(b) Studies:

(i) Survey and evaluation of census and other demographic data for selected countries, including cost-benefit analysis;

(ii) Age reporting and methods of adjustment of age data;

(iii) Sectoral population projections;

(iv) Comparative studies on relationship between population growth and food supply, labour force and employment, education, health, housing, investments, etc.;

(v) Trends in migration and urbanization in the region and their economic and social implications;

(vi) Demographic aspects of manpower and employment;

(vii) Comparative studies of educational attainments and their interrelationships with fertility, mortality and migration;

(viii) Studies of mortality levels, trends, and differentials in the Africa region;

(ix) Demographic aspects of nomadic and refugee populations.

(c) Collection and dissemination of information:

(i) Preparation of a compendium of population data, estimates and projections, demographic surveys, research work and studies on population trends and their implications on the socio-economic development of countries in the region, through issues of Demographic Handbook for Africa, and African Population Studies Series; preparation and publication of technical manuals;

(ii) Preparation and publication of information on population, and stimulating contact among workers on African Demography through issues of African Population Newsletter, African Directory of Demographers, and assistance in bringing out an African Population Journal;

(iii) Provision of selective documentation on demographic and related data and research and studies on various aspects of population problems.

(d) Conferences, meetings, seminars and expert working groups (1971-1976):

(i) African Population Conference (1971);

(ii) Conference of African Demographers (biennial from 1971);

(iii) Regional UN inter-agency co-ordination on population meetings (annual);

(iv) Meeting of non-UN organizations interested in population work in Africa (annual);

(v) Seminar on statistics and studies of migration and urbanization (1971);

(vi) Expert Group on techniques of evaluation of basic demographic data (1972);

(vii) Working Group on statistics and studies on nomadic population (1972);

(viii) Working Group on national and sub-national population projections (1973);

(ix) Working Group on mortality surveys and studies in Africa (1974);

(x) Working Group on demographic aspects of manpower and employment (1975);

(xi) Working Group on demographic aspects of educational planning (1976).

**Related programmes:**

There will be close collaboration between the Centre and the following organizations in the implementation of these projects: Population Division, New York; WHO; FAO; UNESCO; ILO; UNHCR and the following ECA divisions: Research and Planning; Statistics; Human Resources Development; Industry and Housing.

26. 9.10. Policies and programming

Origin:

General Assembly resolution 2211(XXI), ECOSOC resolution 1347(XLV), Ninth session of the Commission (Report, paras. 517-524); Sixth Conference of African Statisticians (Report); Expert Group on Population (Report).

Project aim:

To create increased awareness of the short- and long-term problems relating to different aspects of population and assist the African governments to resolve the problems through the formulation and implementation of effective population policies.

Priority A

Work content:

(a) Assistance to governments (1971-1976):

(i) In formulating, implementing, and evaluating national population policies and programmes and conducting pertinent methodological studies;

(ii) In designing, executing, and analysing surveys on fertility, infant mortality, and evaluation of population programmes;

(iii) By participating and assisting in national meetings on population policies and various aspects of population programmes.

(b) Studies:

(i) Comparative studies of fertility levels, trends and differentials in African countries;

(ii) Study of marriage patterns and their relation to fertility;

(iii) Study of socio-economic factors of low fertility in specific population groups;

(iv) Study of policies and programmes on urbanization and population distribution;

(v) Studies of methods and techniques in fertility analysis (including use of computers);

(vi) Extent, organization, and methodology of population programmes in Africa;

(vii) Study of Administration of population programmes;

(viii) Comparative studies of communication techniques used by African countries in their population programmes;

(c) Collection and dissemination of information:

(i) Compilation and dissemination of selective documentation on data, research and studies on population policies and programmes;

(ii) Conducting pilot studies on fertility, infant mortality and evaluation of population programmes in selected African countries with a view to evolving suitable methodology.

(d) Conferences, meetings, seminars, and expert working groups (1971-1976):

(i) Expert Group on policies affecting urbanization and population distribution (1972);

(ii) Expert Group on national population policies (1973);

(iii) Working Group on communication aspects of family planning programmes (1974);

(iv) Expert Group on administration of population programmes (1975);

(v) Working Group on effectiveness of family planning programmes (1976);

(vi) Study-tour on population programmes.

Related programmes:

WHO, Economic Research and Planning and Human Resources Development Divisions of ECA.

27. 91.21 Regional training and research

Origin:

General Assembly resolution 2211(XXI), Ninth session of the Commission (Report, E/4651, para. 522), Sixth Conference of African Statisticians, Expert Group on Population.

Project aim:

To assist African governments in meeting the need for trained demographic personnel by providing facilities on all aspects of demographic training and research to trainees and research workers.

Priority A

Work content:

(a) assistance to governments (1971-1976):

(i) Provision of assistance to African governments and institutions in demographic training at national institutions;

(ii) Establishment and maintenance of regional demographic training and research centres at Accra (for English-speaking countries) and Yaounde (for French-speaking countries);

(d) Conferences, meetings, seminars, expert working groups (1971-1976):

(i) Meetings of Directors of UN Demographic Training and Research Centres (biennial from 1971):

(ii) Meetings on training in demography and population programmes (1973).

Related programmes:

UN Headquarters, WHO, UNESCO, ILO, UNHCR, Statistics Division, Human Resources Development Division of ECA.

28. Concerning the question of a Standing Technical Committee on Population, it may be noted that the 1971 African Population Conference will, after the scientific sessions, be followed by an ECA Conference of Demographers, composed of representatives of African Governments. This may constitute a Technical Committee of the ECA, of the same nature as the present Conference of African Statisticians and the Conference of African Planners.

29. It is hoped that the recommendations of this body as well as the advice of the Annual Regional Inter-agency Meetings among the UN organization and the meetings of Non-united national organizations will produce a co-ordinated comprehensive programme in the field of population for the African region.