



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



66 296
Distr.
LIMITED
E/CN.14/TRANS/85
28 September 1972
Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Port Management Conference
West African Coast

Freetown, 9-13 October 1972

THE ROLE OF ECA IN THE TRANSPORT FIELD

1. Basically, the role should be to provide a co-ordinating stimulus for the immediate and long-term transport needs of the Region, in conjunction with the appropriate UN Specialized Agencies and to provide cross-fertilization of ideas between member countries with similar problems and between sub-regions. Action should be taken on the results of ECA programmes measured annually to indicate not only start and completion of projects but reasons for delays in ongoing projects.

An important function of the section should be the collection and systematic dissemination of information germane to the needs and aspirations of the sub-regions and, where appropriate, the individual member Governments.

Objectives

2. In the knowledge that transport is a service which must be capable of reacting to the changing needs of trade and industry, it may be useful to set out or reiterate specific objectives for the section on the following lines:

Ultimate objectives

3. (a) to develop an awareness among member States and within ECA secretariat of the economic and social benefits to be derived from achieving efficiency of movement on all routes on which African trade flows, whether on land, sea or air;
- (b) to be continuously aware of the major problems and needs of African countries in the transport field and to develop and adapt as need be, work programmes aimed at satisfying the principal needs in this area including those of tourism.

Programme objectives

4. (a) to develop a programme of action-oriented movement studies designed to cover those facets of African trade which suffer from or are adversely affected by inferior, inefficient or non-existent movement systems, including special attention to landlocked and least-developed countries in Africa;
- (b) to review transport policies, national and international, and be continuously aware of major changes and be prepared to comment upon or react to them effectively;
- (c) to promote and encourage sub-regional studies on the movement of specific selected commodities of importance to these areas, to measure their cost-effectiveness embracing the marketing requirement of quality control at point of sale, and freight charges;
- (d) to collect and disseminate information (including the use of visual aids) on a systematic basis with a view to (i) encouraging a two-way flow of current information on subjects of topical interest; (ii) effecting a cross-fertilisation of ideas in the field of movement economics; and (iii) promoting the initiation of practical experiments and/or proving trials in transport methods prior to full-scale studies;
- (e) to harmonize transport planning with planning in other economic sectors concerned with trade development, both within the secretariat and appropriate Government departments;
- (f) to maintain co-ordinated liaison with UN and other Specialized Agencies working in the transport field, with particular reference to (i) transport projects within Africa, and (ii) external projects affecting African countries.

Approach to the problem

5. Whilst appreciating that there may be certain regional objectives, it is felt that the most profitable approach to transport problems in the African region would be on a sub-regional basis. Taking into account the social and economic needs of the sub-regions separately, and of their potential trade development, some overlapping between sub-regions would occur, e.g., on deep-sea shipping questions and coastal transport in West and Central Africa. This calls for a co-ordinated approach to movement studies to ensure that the movement needs of the sub-region (by all modes of transport) can keep pace with the developing needs of industries.

6. There is need to:

- (a) determine the priorities within the sub-regions with respect to country planning in the trade and transport fields. Input information required includes, inter alia, what member Governments (i) are doing now; (ii) are planning to do, and (iii) hope to do in the future in the Transport sector;
- (b) determine the limits and availability of funds;
- (c) devise a manning-scale consistent with the limits imposed (availability of funds and specialists).

Training

7. Whilst it may not be a primary role of the Section to train management specialists, a number of carefully selected African graduate economists with an interest in movement economics would materially benefit from attachment to the Transport Section for practical training, including field work. Such trainees could also act as useful liaison members between sub-sections, once projects have been established. After two years or more in the Section, they could ultimately qualify for appointment within the secretariat, or within their own countries.

Participation in practical trials

8. Aware of the need to justify expenditure and the importance of cost effectiveness, it is felt that further consideration should be given to combining with sub-regional studies the possibilities of field trials and experiments, the costs of which could be borne by the country concerned, e.g., theoretical arguments on various aspects of unitization have often been confirmed or confounded by local "demonstration trials" of specific commodities being handled in local "product habitat" conditions. One week's demonstration and trial leading to decisions is better than eighteen months' discussions and inconclusive results. The ECA liaison duties should include time spent in organizing such experiments/demonstrations.
