

6-15-85
August 1985

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT
AND MANPOWER DIVISION

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE IN AFRICA PROGRAMME:
ON-GOING AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

ECA's Programme in Public Administration and Finance in Africa aims at promoting the adoption of sound administrative, managerial, fiscal and budgetary policies and practices as essentially integral elements of African Development strategies and also at strengthening the capabilities of African Governments and institutions for the effective implementation of such policies.

The activities undertaken within the framework of this programme are organized in two sub-programmes, namely Public Administration and Development of Budgetary and Taxation Systems. The subprogramme on public administration addresses, in particular, problems associated with the management of public enterprises, personnel training, the organization and functioning of central and local government institutions and the management and administration of public services. Particular attention is given to the strengthening of institutional capabilities and increasing the knowledge, skills and decision-making capabilities of key government and parastatal personnel through advisory and consultative missions, training workshops and the preparation of technical reports on specific issues and problems. The subprogramme on Development of Budgetary and Taxation Systems focuses principally on promoting the effective management and use of public financial resources by providing assistance to member States in the form of advisory services and training for their public finance officers in the fields of financial management, budgetary management and tax administration.

II. ACTIVITIES IN 1984-1985

The Public Administration Sub-programme is implemented by two regular budget staff members and two regional advisors, while two regular budget staff members and one regional advisor are responsible for the implementation of the Development of Budgetary and Taxation Systems Sub-programme. One observation that must be made at the outset is the fact that the programme suffers from paucity of staff and financial resources in the face of the monumental challenge posed by the current socio-economic crisis, the critical role of public administration and management in dealing with the crisis and the less than favourable state of public administration and management in the continent.

Having said this, one must also add that the achievements have been considerable. A summary of the activities that have been and will be undertaken under this programme during the 1984-1985 biennium is given below herein:

1. Public Administration

(i) Advisory Services to Member States

Since the beginning of 1984, 11 advisory services were provided to the following member States: Chad, Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia and Seychelles. These missions were undertaken to advise member States on problems related to the organization and management of public enterprises; efficiency in the public service; training needs in the public service; strengthening the capacities of public administration and management institutes; reorienting the curricula of management institutes; and managerial manpower development in parastatal organizations. During the remaining part of 1985 advisory services are expected to be rendered to the ECOWAS Secretariat, Botswana, Mauritius, Gambia and Uganda.

(ii) Training

Training workshops were conducted in Botswana, Cameroon, Gambia, Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia on public enterprise management; local government; field administration; and training of trainers. Five more such training workshops are expected to be undertaken during the remaining part of 1985.

(iii) Studies and Reports

The following studies and reports have been and will be prepared during 1984-1985:

"The Management of Human Resources for Enhanced Productivity", "The Managerial Dimension of Africa's Socio-Economic Crisis: The Role of Institutions of Higher Learning", "The Nature and Effectiveness of Training for Decentralized Administrative Systems in Africa", "Organization and Management of Institutions for Rural Development", "Possibilities for Cooperation Among African Public Enterprises with a view to Establishing Joint African Multinational Enterprises", and "The Role of Local Government in National Development".

(iv) Extra-Budgetary Activities

In addition to the aforementioned regular budget activities, two activities are currently being implemented from extra-budgetary funds, namely The Procurement and Supply Management Project and The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) Project.

The Procurement and Supply Management Project is funded by the Indian Government and has the main objective of enabling member States to benefit from the technical training and advisory services, which the project offers, to conserve scarce foreign

exchange resources, judiciously use the procured materials and establish effective procurement and supply units and functions at the national level. A three week national training workshop was organized last month in Ethiopia followed by a month-long advisory services to various Ethiopian agencies such as the Coffee Plantation Development Corporation, The Agricultural Equipment and Technical Services Corporation and the Government's Procurement and Supplies Control Department of the Ministry of Finance. Several such workshops and advisory services are in the pipeline during the remaining part of 1985: Sudan (September), Kenya and Zimbabwe (October), Malawi (November) and Libya (December).

ECA is the executing agency of the UNDP funded ESAMI project in which the ILO and ITC also participate. This project aims at strengthening the capability of ESAMI in the areas of training, consultancy and research with a view to enabling the Institute to better serve the public administration and management training needs of its 13 member States.

2. Development of Budgetary and Taxation Systems

One regular budget post and the post of the regional adviser under this sub-programme have been vacant since early in 1985. Despite this, the following activities have been and/or will be implemented during the 1984-1985 biennium.

(i) Training Workshops

- Workshop on Issues on Tax Fraud and Evasion, The Promotion of Tax Awareness and Techniques of Tax Legislation. March 1984 (Botswana);
- Subregional Training Workshop in Customs Administration April 1984 (Zambia);
- National Workshop on Public Financial Administration and Budgetary Management September 1984 (Botswana);
- National Workshop on Management of Public Finance for Development November 1984 (Ethiopia).

(ii) Studies and Reports

- Study on the Feasibility of Introducing and Operating Efficiency Audit Systems for Public Resources (completed);
- Study on the Financing and Administration of Government Budget Reserves in Botswana November 1985;

- Feasibility study on the Development or Establishment of Sub-regional or Regional Tax Training Facilities and Centres in Africa November 1985;
- Roster of African Taxation Experts December 1985.

(iii) Meetings

- Second General Assembly Meeting of the Association of Tax Administrators March 1984 (Botswana)

3. Other Related Activities

Although not part of the Public Administration and Finance in Africa Programme, a number of activities have been implemented by the Public Administration, Management and Manpower Division of ECA during 1984-1985 as part of the "Education and Training for Development" and "Manpower and Employment Planning and Policies" sub-programmes which are related to issues under consideration within the framework of the Special Action Programme; particularly the re-orientation of existing training programmes and strengthening programmes for the development of human resources required in priority areas of development. A summary of these activities is given below:

- Sub-regional Graduate Schools of Business Management and Finance in Africa

During 1984-1985 ECA has continued to carry out activities within the framework of ECA's Conference of Ministers Resolution 318 (XIII) calling for the development of appropriate multinational, sub-regional and regional training institutions and programmes designed to meet Africa's managerial present and future manpower needs, using existing national or multinational institutions.

- In February 1985, the Public Administration, Management and Manpower Division organized the 2nd ECA/Association of African Universities' Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and Presidents of the Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa on the theme of "The Response of the African Institutions of Higher Learning to Africa's Rapidly Deteriorating Economic and Social Conditions". The Conference adopted Mbabane Programme of Action which sets out in concrete terms the nature and extent of the re-orientation that is required in the training, research and consultancy functions of the institutions of higher learning to better respond to the short and long-term developmental needs in Africa. The ECA Conference of Ministers took note of the report and adopted a resolution calling on the African institutions of higher learning to speedily implement Mbabane Programme of Action and other recommendations contained in the report of the Conference and also called on African Governments to provide timely and effective material, financial and moral support to their

institutions of higher learning in a manner that will enable the latter to discharge their functions with greater efficiency.

- Four workshops on management education and finance/accountancy were held in 1984-1985 in cooperation with Botswana Institute of Development and Management and Kenya Institute of Adult Education.
- Workshops in manpower and employment planning were held in Lesotho, Liberia, Uganda, Gambia and Sierra Leone during 1984-85. A regional programme has also been established at IDEP starting 1985 under funding from USAID. ECA is the executing agency.
- PAIFD will organize in November 1985 a consultative meeting in management training in Eastern and Southern Africa, the objectives of which are to review the state of the art in management development with a view to advising on a strategy for greater relevance, coherence and complementarity in the functioning of national and sub-regional institutions; the provision of critical skills; and enhancing intra-subregional cooperation in research, education and consultancy in management.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. 1986-1987 Programme of Work

Special attention, within the framework of 1986-1987 programme budget, will be given to the strengthening of the managerial and administrative capabilities of African Governments and institutions and to encouraging the efficient mobilization and use of resources. Advisory services play an important role in this context and would be geared, under both sub-programmes, to satisfy needs in priority areas of development with a view to increasing the operational content and value of such services.

(i) Public Administration

Emphasis will be laid on policies and programmes for increasing efficiency in and productivity of public services and the strengthening of the management of public enterprises and institutions. Aside from training activities and advisory services that will be provided, on request, to member States, the following main activities will be undertaken:

- Organization of two regional training workshops on approaches and methods for organizing management services systems for senior officials responsible for formulating policies and programmes on public services.
- Technical publications on (a) country experiences in evolving approaches and methods for organizing management systems as instruments for performance improvement in African public services;

and (b) organization and management of specific rural agencies for provision of basic needs.

- Preparation of 6 in-depth country studies on criteria and techniques for evaluating public enterprises performance; and 2 studies on implications of policies and programmes for privatization of public enterprises in Africa.
- Preparation of case studies on problems of public personnel management in least developed African countries.

Training and advisory activities within the framework of the Indian Government funded Procurement and Supply Management project will also be intensified.

ECA will also intensify its cooperation with regional and sub-regional institutions, organizations and centres dealing with public administration, management and finance issues, such as ESAMI and CAFRAD, with a view to improving the delivery capabilities of these organizations and increase collaboration between them.

(ii) Development of Budgetary and Taxation Systems:

Activities will focus on improvement of budgetary systems; financial management in Government; and improvement of tax administration. Aside from advisory services, the following main activities will be undertaken:

- Organization of two national courses for government budget officials on improvement of government budgeting systems and practices.
- Organization of one sub-regional seminar for government officials of Eastern and Southern Africa on Public Financial Management.
- Organization of two training workshops for tax administrators on middle management development in tax administration: basic issues in tax auditing and examination.
- Organization of two national training courses for customs officials on tax systems and policies.
- Technical publication on:
 - (a) The assessment of specific conditions and needs of public financial management in one least-developed country; and
 - (b) Expenditure control, efficiency audit systems and the management of government budget reserves.

(iii) Other Related Activities

- Organization of the Third ECA/AAU Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa. Theme: "The Future of Higher Education in Africa and Africa's Long-term Development Problems".

- Follow-up activities: Establishment of Sub-regional Graduate Schools of Business Management and Finance.
- Organization of workshops on employment and manpower planning.
- Re-orientation of educational policies, programmes and practices.

2. Proposals for Strengthening ECA's Future Activities in Public Administration and Management within the Framework of the Special Action Programme

ECA welcomes very much the initiative for joint inter-agency promotion, elaboration and implementation of the Special Action Programme in Public Administration and Management in Africa, for the genesis of the African debilitating socio-economic crisis owes its origin, in no small measure, to weaknesses in administrative, managerial and financial structures and inefficient administrative, managerial and financial practices. Unless a frontal, concerted and well co-ordinated attack is mounted and sustained as long as necessary to overcome these inadequacies, little hope remains for Africa to extricate itself from this quagmire and gain the initiative for reconstruction and long-term development. Such an effort calls for close and effective cooperation between African countries, the United Nations system and the multilateral and main technical assistance bilateral agencies in mounting the programme.

Mention has been made in an earlier part of this paper of the paucity of the financial and human resources available for the public administration and finance programme. Given that additional resources could be forthcoming, the following additional activities could be undertaken by ECA within the framework of the Special Action Programme:

1. As part of the need to assess past and on-going efforts and to determine the thrust of future programmes in the area of administration, management and finance ECA could assume a primary responsibility to organize, on behalf of and in close collaboration with the members of the Working Group, a meeting of experts in public administration and management in Africa focusing on the theme: "Twenty Five Years of Public Administration and Management in Africa: An Assessment and Programme for Future Action". The meeting should be attended by about 20 carefully selected African experts drawn from public services and academic institutions in Africa in addition to representatives of UN organizations, international organizations, funding agencies, sub-regional and regional centres, inter-governmental institutions etc. Among the main objectives of the meeting will be the following:
 - (a) Assessment of the experience in improving administrative and managerial capabilities in public services and parastatal systems in African countries;
 - (b) Formulation of a general plan of action to determine priority areas in which different organizations should concentrate their efforts;

- (c) Critically assess experiences in technical cooperation in public administration and management and make recommendations for improving the efficiency of programming, implementation, control and evaluation systems and procedures;
- (d) Evaluation of PA&D's current Programme of Work and recommendation of priority areas for action in the next MTP period, 1990-1996.

As mentioned above, ECA could have primary responsibility for organizing the meeting and preparing the main documents. Funding is expected to be made available by the major participating international organizations. Mid-1986 could be a good tentative date for the meeting.

- 2. In order to obtain a realistic and up-to-date picture of the management and administrative situation and assess, on a regular basis, the magnitude of the problem confronting African managerial and administrative systems within the overall development context, it is necessary that uniform surveys should be carried out at the country level as a continuous exercise. A proposed title for this project could be: Survey of African Administrative and Managerial Conditions. ECA would require consultancy funds to implement this project.

3. Materials Management

The record of performance in the management of Government procurement and supplies systems has generally been poor. One reason for this is that the dramatic expansion in the size of the public sector in most African countries has meant that besides the central system for government procurement and supplies there now exists a multiplicity of separate systems serving individual parastatals or groups of parastatals. It has also meant a tremendous increase in the volume and diversity of physical items involved. The resulting complexity of the materials management function has added new dimensions to decision-making particularly as regards sources of supplies and factors to be taken into account in deciding on alternative sources of procurement.

A second reason for the poor performance of public sector procurement and supply management is the shortage of technical skills. Training institutions tend to give a back-seat to causes in this field. Officials responsible for formulation and implementation of training policy tend to give less prominence to a function often perceived as mundane and not requiring sophisticated knowledge, skills and techniques.

On the other hand, given the complexity of present-day procurement and supply functions, as noted above, it is important that resources be devoted to developing appropriate skills through training. ECA

will continue to execute the "Advisory and Training Services in Procurement and Supply Management in Africa" project funded by the Government of India. Additional funding from other sources is required to enable ECA to expand its activities in this important field.

4. Public Enterprise Management

Overcoming weakness in public management capacities and systems and increasing the efficiency of the use of public resources are among the issues that require priority attention. Although ECA will continue activities in this area, what the programme offers is a trifle by comparison with the challenge that stare us in the face. Additional manpower and financial resources will be required to establish a good programme in public enterprise management.

5. Administrative Requirements for Rural Development

Similarly, additional resources will be required to expand ECA's on-going activities in this important field for which no elaborate justification is required.

6. Efficient Use of Resources

Given the availability of additional manpower resources, ECA could also further intensify its activities in the areas of taxation, budgeting and financial management and expand advisory services in other areas such as public expenditure programming and public enterprise pricing policies.

7. Other Activities

Naturally, ECA will be working closely with other agencies in implementing the proposed aforementioned activities, which are only a few elements of the required special action programme. Other agencies will have to take a lead role in implementing other important activities such as training of emergency/relief and reconstruction personnel; and assistance in establishing administrative machinery and mechanisms as focal points for dealing with relief and rehabilitation. Close inter-agency cooperation is also needed in areas such as enhancing national capabilities to better manage foreign aid and resources and to better manage the mounting foreign debt. ECA stands ready to contribute to these activities if resources are made available.