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**DEMOGRAPHIC LEVELS AND TRENDS IN AFRICA AND
ITS RELATION WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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I. Introduction

1. The area of the African continent constitutes 22.0 per cent of the total land surface of the world and it is estimated to have contained in mid-1970, 355 million persons or almost 10.0 per cent of the total world population. The percentage share of Africa in world population was 7.9 per cent in the 1930's.

2. The estimated rate of annual increase of the African population was 1.9 per cent in the 1930's. It increased to 2.3 per cent during the period 1960/65; and to 2.5 per cent during the period 1965/70, compared to the annual rate of 2.0 per cent of the world population. This rate of growth is next only to Latin America (2.8 per cent per year). According to the most recent UN estimates, Africa would have the highest rate of population growth among the world regions within the next two decades. Some African countries reached or are very close to the annual 3 per cent mark.

3. The average density in total area of the African continent was estimated in 1966 by 11 persons per square kilometer as compared to world total at 25 which is considered to be the most sparsely populated of all the world regions. The most densely populated sub-regions are the West and the East, (16 and 15 persons per square kilometer respectively).

4. The density in arable land was estimated at 135 persons in a square kilometer as compared to the world density of 231 in 1966. 1/

5. It should, however, be pointed out that measures of density constitute only one aspect of the population pressure in relation to resources and the potentialities of economic development. The limitation of the measure remains even when allowances are made for arable land and agricultural population.

6. The highest crude birth rate and death rate among the world regions during 1960-1966 are recorded in Africa, with 46 per 1,000 population for birth rate and 23 per 1,000 for death rate as against 34 and 16 per 1,000 respectively for the world averages. The estimates for 1965/1970 is 46.7 for birth rate and 21.2 for death rate for all Africa as against 33.8 and 14.0 for the whole world respectively. 2/

1/ UN, ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1968.

2/ UN Population Division World Population Prospects, 1965-85, as Assessed in 1968, (Working Paper No.30, December 1969).

7. With high and constant fertility, without any evidence of decline in the near future (except possibly in Tunisia) and the decline of infant mortality, Africa is characterized by a high proportion of children under 15 years of age, forming about 43 per cent on the average, of the total population. Population in working age groups (15-59) constitutes about 53 per cent and almost 4 per cent are in the ages 60 and over, and consequently Africa has a high dependency ratio which places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working-age population, lowering the per capita income and deteriorating the already very low standard of living.

8. Meanwhile, large numbers of children should be provided with at least basic education, public health facilities and housing for the accommodation of big size families. These social services need capital investments which are extracted from funds allocated for economic development. In addition, it may not be possible to create the employment opportunities for the increasing number of people who will be joining the labour force.

9. Another obvious characteristic of African population is the rapid urbanization, where the concept of the modern city is relatively new to most African countries. The rate of urban growth in Africa during these last two decades is higher than any other part in the world and is expected to remain so till the end of the century at least. It is projected that almost one in five Africans would be living in towns of 20,000 or more inhabitants by 1980. The degree of urbanization and the growth rate of urban population in Africa vary considerably from country to country and from one sub-region to another. Many African countries have more than half of their urban population in the principal or capital city, which is due mainly, to the development of one major centre to serve administrative and other business interests of the majority of the country's population.

II. Availability of Demographic Data

10. Although population censuses began to be undertaken on a continuing basis in some African countries in the second half of the 19th century, some countries still depend on administrative enumeration as a main source of population data.^{1/} Many African countries made their last population enquiry during the period 1965-1969, and others plan to have their censuses during the period 1970-1974, with the possible exception of Ethiopia and Somalia. In general, it may be said about 70 per cent of the total population in Africa are covered by nation-wide population enquiries since 1958 to date.

^{1/} Report of the ECA Seminar on Application of Demographic Data and Analysis to Development Planning, Addis Ababa, 2-9 June 1969
(E/CN.14/457; E/CN.14/POP/10).

11. Sampling surveys were used in some African countries to secure demographic data on a regional or national basis. The utility of sample surveys have been increased in a number of instances by recording the primary data (e.g. total numbers, sex, employment status etc.), by means of a complete census-type inquiry, and other more details statistics (ages, fertility, literacy, length of residence, etc.) by sampling survey. Procedures of this kind have been used in East Africa, Nigeria, and the UAR, among others.

12. Both the population census and vital statistics are of tremendous importance in order to build up a demographic picture of a country as it moves in time and a base-line for projecting the future characteristics upon which the economic and social planning depends. Meantime, the systematic appraisal and analysis of the demographic data is difficult in the absence of vital statistics.

13. As for population censuses, so also for vital registration, registration had started over 70 years ago in some African countries but over most parts of Africa, registration of vital events is either non-existent or defective. And the reliability of the rates, derived from the "reverse-survival estimates", depends on the validity of the assumptions involved. Sample surveys are now being increasingly used to provide directly the basic vital statistics by the method of retrospective enquiries; but caution must be exercised to adjust for non-sampling errors and biases in all processes of data collection, whether on a sample or complete enumeration basis. Sample surveys are likely to provide less accurate data on deaths than on births and it is also more difficult to estimate death rates from census data than birth rates. Mortality estimates for African countries are, therefore, much less satisfactory than fertility estimates. Infant mortality rates are, moreover, subject to proportionately greater error than crude death rates, since deaths of infants are more likely to escape reporting. However techniques have been developed for obtaining adjusted estimates for vital rates from defective or limited data which have found wide applications in African demographic surveys.^{1/} Such adjusted will have to be used pending the establishment of comprehensive systems of vital registration in countries where they are lacking and the extension and improvement of the functioning of such systems where they exist.

^{1/} Manuals on Methods of Estimating Population, Manual E, Methods of Estimating Basic Demographic Measures from Incomplete Data (United Nations Publication, Sales No.: 67.xiii.2); W. Brass, A.J. Coale, P. Demeny, D. Heisel, F. Lorimer, A. Romaniuk, and E. van de Walle, The Demography of Tropical Africa (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968); R. K. Som, Recall Lapse in Demographic Enquiries (London and Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1970).

III. Density of Population

14. The population for total Africa is estimated at 355 million by mid-1970. Almost 27 per cent of the African population is found in North Africa (86.6 million); 31.3 per cent in West Africa (111.3 million); 10.1 per cent in Central Africa (35.9 million); 27.6 per cent in East Africa (97.9 million); and about 4.0 per cent in the Southern African region (22.8 million). 1/

15. The overall population density in Africa is low, almost 12 persons per square kilometre in 1970. This measure, however, has little meaning when it is considered that the continent encompassed vast areas which are uninhabitable deserts and most of the remaining land is agriculturally poor. The density in arable land was estimated in 1966 at 135 persons per square kilometer, with wide diversity between African countries. The highest density was recorded in the UAR (1,108), followed by Angola (573) and Kenya (552) persons per square kilometer of arable land.2/ With few exception the sparsely populated arable land is found in the Central and West African countries, where the density of population in arable land lies between 23 in the Central African Republic to 399 in Mauritania per square kilometer.2/ In general, the urban and coastal areas are the most densely populated, as well as areas near water resources and mineral deposits.

IV. Factors of Demographic Change in Africa

A. Fertility

16. Despite the deficiencies in vital statistics data in most of the African countries available fertility accurate data indicate that the fertility rates are at present the highest in the world. The birth rates generally range from 35 in Gabon to around 55 per 1,000 in some West African countries. Birth rate in most of the countries lies between 43 and 49 with an average of 46 per thousand and the gross reproduction rate (GRR) is 3.0 as estimated by the United Nations during 1960-1966.3/ Estimate of birth rate in Africa for the period 1965/70 is 46.7 per thousand population as against 33.8 for the whole world.4/

1/ World Population Prospects, 1965-85 as Assessed in 1968. It should be noted that the ECA definition of the African sub-regions is somewhat different.

2/ UNECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1968.

3/ UNECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, p. 68, Addis Ababa, 1968.

4/ World Population Prospects, 1965-85 as Assessed in 1968.

17. Measures of fertility vary considerably among African sub-regions and countries. It is reported that countries of the West African sub-region have the highest fertility rates, with an average birth rate of 54 per 1,000 and the GRR 3.4 around 1965. The lowest level of fertility was recorded for Central Africa with an average birth rate of 43 per thousand and GRR 2.3. The sub-regions are generally homogeneous in regard to fertility measures, although there are some countries which do not confirm to the average pattern within a sub-region.

18. Differential fertility is similar in Africa to the other parts of the world as demonstrated by many demographers. Generally, fertility has been shown to be higher in the rural than in the urban areas in Africa with few exceptions e.g., a study of fertility differential in UAR indicated higher fertility rates in urban areas than in rural areas. ^{1/} In this study and in other fertility studies in some African countries it was shown that there is an inverse relationship between the educational attainment and the socio-economic status of the couples and their levels of fertility.

19. Age patterns of fertility in African countries show some typical and some atypical features as compared with the model age patterns developed by the UN: this is under further study at the Secretariat.^{2/}

20. Since the fertility pattern depends on cultural values and social customs, accelerated economic development, and educational progress, it seems unlikely that fertility will show any marked decline in the near future in most African countries unless it is made a policy by the governments as an integral part of the national development plans.

B. Nuptiality:

21. Marriage is an important institution in all tribal societies, but its definition varies among tribes in different African countries and might even vary among tribes and regions in the same country. To understand the tribal African marriage we have to think of it as a development process.^{3/} This complicates the reporting of marriages in population inquiries, because it may be taken at any moment of marriage development.

^{1/} A.M. Zikry, ("Fertility Differentials of the UAR Women", World Population Conference Belgrade, 1965 Vol.II Summary Report (Sales No.66.XIII.6).

^{2/} R.K. Som, "Age Patterns of Fertility in African countries", International Symposium on the Problems of Human Reproduction, Varna, Bulgaria, 25-30 September 1969.

^{3/} Redoliff-Brown, R.A., and D. Forde, African System of Kinship and Marriage, London, Oxford University Press, 1950.

22. African women generally marry at fairly early ages. Data on the age at first marriage should be used with cautious because of the ambiguities in the definition of marriage and the mis-statement of the current age and the age at first marriage.

23. Polygamy is, in principle, still existing and recognized in most African countries, but its percentage varies considerably from one country to another and is higher in tribal and rural communities than in urban areas and it varies also among socio-economic strata of the population, the higher the socio-economic status, the less frequent is polygamous marriage.^{1/} The highest rate of polygamy are recorded in West Africa, with Guinea recording having the highest percentage (37 per cent of her married man had more than one wife in 1954-55). With the exception of non African, the percentage of husbands who had more than one wife during 1950-1960 was 25 per cent on the average.^{2/}

24. Instability of marriage has often accompanied the disruption of the tribal cohesiveness, intercourse between tribes and urbanization which created new values and new ways of life. Imbalance in the numbers of men and women in cities has fostered the prevalence of free unions and a high frequency of divorce or separation in the urban areas.

25. New legal forms of marriages, the civil and religious marriages are becoming increasingly important in most African countries, but regular statistical data on marriages and divorces are very rare and incomplete which is due to the non-existent of the marriage and divorce registration system in most African countries.

C. Mortality

26. The infant and childhood mortality rates as well as general mortality rates are higher in Africa more than any other region in the world. With the exception of small islands population the infant mortality rates range between 64-354 per 1000 children born alive and before they reach their first year of life. The average general death rates range between 20-38 per 1,000 population. The life expectancy ranges from 26 in Mali to 54 years in UAR. For Africa as a whole, the average death rate was estimated at 23 per 1,000 and the life expectancy at birth 41 during 1960-1966 as against the world average death rate of 16 per 1,000 population. The death rate is estimated for 1965/70 at 21.2 per thousand population for Africa as against 14.0 per 1,000 for the world.^{3/}

^{1/} G. Wuelker, "Effects of social and Family Patterns on the Population Increase in Togo, UN, World Population Conference 1965; Vol.II. (Sales No.: 66.XIII.6) p. 179.

^{2/} UN, ECA Demographic Handbook for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1968.

^{3/} UN, Population Division World Population Prospects, 1965-85 As Assessed in 1968.

27. The past two decades constitute a period of rapid declines in mortality in many of the African countries for which data are available, because of the low cost but effective medicine imported from abroad and the assistance of the WHO. Decline of mortality is also due to the national public health programme to which all African countries give priority and their utmost consideration during the allocation of their national budget among different units of the social service sector. The drop of the death rate, especially in infant mortality rate in African countries has its effect on the increase of the expectation of life at birth for both sexes. The expectation of life at birth was 40 years as estimated during the period 1960-1966 for all Africa ^{1/}: The estimated is 43.3 on the average for 1965/70 as against the world average 53.1. ^{2/}

28. For all African countries for which mortality rates are available for sex and age groups, they are in general, higher for males than for females except in the UAR, (1960), Upper Volta (1960-61) and the non-white population of South West Africa (1960). The age-specific death rates for the African countries, usually follow the normal pattern of mortality, with high rates at birth, falling to the lowest at the age group 10-14 and then rise gradually reaching the highest level at the oldest age group.^{1/} Mortality rates are correlated with social class. This is because of the difference in socio-economic status and medical care.

D. Migration:

29. There has been a neglect of migration as a major factor in demographic change in most population studies, which might be due to lack of interest, scarcity of data and unvalidity of migration measures used.

30. Nevertheless, the analysis of migration as an indicator of demographic as well as economic and social imbalance could be made by estimating net migration gains and losses during intervals between censuses by sex-age groups according to place of birth and/or (place of origin), and place of residence during the census period. Classification of population by tribal affiliations could also be used for migration studies.

31. International migration is influenced by the economic, social and political conditions in the countries of origins. Economic conditions particularly those relating to supply and demand at labour is the major factor which determines the direction and volume of migration and the quality of migrants according to the demand of the country of destination. The need of foreign skilled labour should be met by policies favouring selection immigration. African countries may start negotiations with other neighbouring African countries to formulate

^{1/} UN, ECA Demographic Handbook for Africa, p. 95, 1968.

^{2/} UN, World Population Prospects, 1965-85, as Assessed in 1968.

bilateral agreements for the exchange of skilled labourers and technical and professional personnel. This may be less in labour-unit cost than for the non-Africans. The assimilation and acculturation of African migrants will be easier than those of the expatriates derived out of the African continent.

32. West Africa, from Senegal to Cameroon, is probably the most characterized by greater seasonal migration in Africa. From inland countries like Mali, Upper Volta and Niger, and from the northern part of Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria, male migrants move generally in a southward direction during the dry season, from October until April, to more developed rural and urban areas, and then return back home to cultivate in their own farms. Normal population censuses do not provide any data on the annual movements in terms of their patterns and timing. Some indicators of the volume of migrants may be given in a de facto census during the absence of the migrants. 1/ There is also the nomadic movements between certain countries in Africa. The biggest of such movements are between Ethiopia and Somalia; Somalia and Kenya; and Mauritania and Morocco. 2/

33. Movements associated with rural-urban migration are a more important feature of the mobility that has developed in most African countries during the colonial era. People are increasingly moving from rural areas to expanding urban centres. Although Africa is the least urbanized region of the world's major regions (around 13 per cent in the average, for towns of 20,000 and more population), the growth rate of urban population is one of the highest, 5.4 per cent annually as against the world rate of 3.2 per cent. One of the most pressing problems currently facing many African countries is the drift migrations from rural to urban areas with its social and economic implications.

34. Factors affecting rural-urban migration are usually, categorized into push and pull factors, but briefly, they may be classified into two major categories: 1) economic factors; such as poverty due to pressure of population on the cultivated land; low standard of living and underemployment in rural areas etc.; 2) social and psychological factors e.g. the desire to break away from the constraints of traditional social organization to a more social freedom in towns; attractive of the urban areas which offer or seem to offer to the country-man more advantages and amenities that are not available in rural areas.

35. African countries vary considerably in their rate of urbanization. In 1960 almost 25 per cent of the total population of North Africa lived in towns or cities of 20,000 and more; and 18 per cent lived in cities with 100,000 and more population. Available data suggest

1/ R.M. Prothero, "Migration in Tropical Africa" in The Population of Tropical Africa, edited by J.C. Caldwell and C. Okonjo, 1968, PP.250-263.

2/ D.K. Ghansah, "The Volume and Structure of International Migration in Africa", International Union for Scientific Studies of Population Conference, London, 1969.

that the country with the highest percentage in towns (20,000 or more) is the UAR (38.2), followed by Algeria (26.5).

36. The proportion of the population living in towns or cities with 20,000 and more inhabitants in the other sub-regions were as follows in 1960: West Africa (12 per cent), Central Africa (8 per cent); East Africa (5 per cent). South Africa urban population constitute 35.1 per cent of its total population and Rhodesia's 15.9 per cent in 1960. Angola and Mozambique each has one city of more than 1,000,000 inhabitants.^{1/}

37. It is the large cities which creates the biggest problems and it is the localities which are growing faster than small and medium towns. The growth of localities having more than 100,000 inhabitants is 8.6 per cent annually, more than four times the annual rate of population growth in Africa between 1950 and 1960. ^{2/}

38. The present rate of urban growth and the current trends of rural/urban migration show prospects of a rapidly accelerating rate of growth of urban population and expansion of urban localities. This rapid growth is unhealthy and had made it impossible to keep pace with the basic needs of the new urban dwellers for jobs, housing and other amenities. Unemployment and underemployment will rise and the standard of living in towns and cities will be lower and in general, the social milieu will get deteriorated.

39. The movement of refugees across the borders of African countries is a special case of international migration. The refugee movements occurred in Congo (Kinshasa), the Sudan and from Rwanda, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa concentrating mostly in Congo Kinshasa and East Africa, particularly in Uganda. The recorded number of refugees is likely to be an under-estimate. The total number of refugees was estimated at about 735,000 at the beginning of 1967.^{3/} More than 40 per cent of this number are refugees from Angola who are mostly resettling in Congo Kinshasa.^{3/}

V. Population Structure

40. The sex and age distributions of a population are useful as indicators of its manpower potential. It is also of considerable importance to development planning in general, for they provide measures of the dependency load, consumption need and social requirements in the present as well as the future, beside the estimates of the manpower supply and demand for all sectors of the economy.

^{1/} "Size and Growth of Urban Population in Africa", (E/CN.14/CAS.6/3).

^{2/} Op. cit.

^{3/} UN High Commission for Refugees, Monthly Newsletter.

41. The age composition is, on one hand, the product of past fertility, mortality, and migration trends, and on the other hand, it influences, to a certain extent, the natural increase of the population. The effect of mortality on the age composition is very small, relatively to the effect of fertility and the external migration in the case of some African countries. With constant and high fertility the age pyramid in African countries has a wide base, but tapers off rapidly.

42. The population of African countries, similar to other developing countries is a young population, which is characterized with a high percentage of children under 15 years of age constituting around 43 per cent on the average, of the total population. This high proportion of children means heavy dependency load. The average dependency ratio in Africa is about 80 per cent, whereas it is in the developed countries around 60 per cent.

43. The countries where males are clearly higher than females are Libya, Sudan, UAR, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Angola. But females generally outnumber males in the total indigenous population of Africa, especially in the Central and Eastern African sub-regions. The lowest sex-ratios are recorded for Gabon, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Chad, Malawi and Lesotho. Assuming equal degree of accuracy reporting, these low sex-ratios are due to the higher migration rates of males over females to the neighbouring countries with better employment opportunities. For most African countries the sex ratios are higher in urban areas than in rural areas.^{1/}

44. The average percentage of population in the working age group is 53 and of the old age group is about 4 per cent; with a slight difference from this pattern in some few individual countries which may be due to count inaccuracy. It is expected that due to steady high and constant fertility these proportions will reach 45 per cent, 52.0 per cent and 3.0 per cent in 1985 for (0-14 years), (15-64 years) and (65 years and over) respectively.^{2/}

VI. Economically Active Population

45. Variation in male activity rates are comparatively small. 56.8 per cent of males in Africa are economically active as against the world average of 58.3 per cent. On the other hand, participation rate for females vary over a wide range and on the average only 14.5 per cent of African females were recorded as economically active, as against the world average of 27.2 per cent.^{3/} For a number of African countries

^{1/} UN, ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, 1968, p. 27.

^{2/} UN, World Population Prospects, 1965-85 as Assessed in 1968.

^{3/} UN, ECA, Economic Bulletin for Africa, Vol. 5 January 1965, p. 36.

the reported female participation rate is very low, 3 to 5 per cent: it is likely that this is due to differences in definitions affecting especially the females who work as unpaid labour in household enterprises. The activity rates for younger ages (10-14), and the older age groups (65 and over), are typical to other developing areas of the world, are generally higher (21.7 and 64.9 respectively) for the indigenous population than the corresponding rates for the non-indigenous (3.5 of 10-14 and 57.5 per cent for 65 and over).^{1/} The male activity rates for the age groups (19-64) are not different in Africa from the general pattern in developed countries and they ranged from 90 per cent in early ages, reach the peak (97) at the ages 35-44, then they drop back to 90 per cent at the old ages (55-64).

46. It is likely that there will be changes in the activity rates for both sexes in the coming two decades, resulting from factors which bring about social and economic development, viz., spread of education for both sexes; introduction of social security and retirement measures; the change role of women; etc. The expansion of education will reduce the activity rates of the younger age groups, irrespectives of sex. Similarly, the introduction of measures inducing early retirement will decrease the activity rates of the older age groups. However, the effect of the changing role of women on their economic activity cannot be easily predicted since social factors are involved which vary from culture to culture in Africa. It depends also on the rate of economic growth, the expansion of industrialization, the concomitant and healthy urbanization and, as a result, the increase of job opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economics.

47. As indicated by number of persons employed, agriculture is the most important sector in Africa. The proportion engaged in agriculture exceeds 60 per cent of the total economically active in most African countries. The highest percentage of the total labour force working in agriculture is recorded for Nigeria (96 per cent) and the lowest is found in Liberia (36 per cent).^{2/}

48. The highest proportion of wage and salary earners are in North Africa, where the proportion ranges from 34 per cent in Morocco to 51 per cent of the total economically active in Tunisia. In West Africa where the percentage of salary workers are the lowest in Africa, the range is 4 per cent in Nigeria to 33 per cent in Liberia.^{2/}

49. Among the characteristic features of employment in Africa are the following: (i) important groups in the population are not fully participating in the development projects at the local level e.g.,

^{1/} UN, Demographic Aspects of Manpower, New York, 1962 (Sales No. 61.XIII.4).

^{2/} UN, ECA Demographic Handbook for Africa, pp. 113-116.

youth, women, refugees. Persons in these categories may not actively seeking work because suitable work does not appear to be available for them, but this is a real wastage of the available resources; (ii) the shortage of employment opportunities in general in relation to the supply of manpower is another problem facing African countries, which requires long-term manpower planning, and population policy and programme should be integrated in the overall economic development plans. The percentage of employment and unemployment is increasing in most African countries as a result of the increase of the annual rate of population growth which does not keep pace with the increase of economic growth; (iii) there is in general, a serious shortage of trained personnel, while a number of trained persons cannot find full and productive employment in fields for which they are trained. This needs first, accelerating the training programmes, secondly, co-ordination between educational planning and manpower planning and finally proper utilization of the available trained human resources.

VII. Population Growth and Social and Economic Development

50. Accelerating population growth in Africa may aggravate the problem of capital shortage, which is one of the most important obstacles to economic development in African countries. The higher the population growth, the greater the proportion of capital consumed in the consumption goods and the provision of social services to the growing population and the less the proportion invested for production.

51. A high rate of growth of population is sometimes cited as a stimulus to economic development. But, "while in a well-developed dynamic economy the demand for capital investments may serve as a stimulus to continuing economic growth, the case of the underdeveloped countries, with their narrow margin of income over subsistence needs, is different. For most of them it is difficult to save and invest enough from their meagre annual income to permit economic development to proceed at a satisfactory pace, even without rapid population growth. It is true that if these countries can industrialize and better utilize their human as well as their natural resources, some of them at least, will undoubtedly benefit in the long run from a substantially larger population. But even where a large population would be advantageous in the long run, economic progress will be hindered, if numbers increase so rapidly as to put an excessive strain upon the economy".^{1/}

52. The point is that for economic development the rate of growth of population of a country is more relevant than its size and, as it has been observed earlier rate of growth of population of African countries is accelerated and ~~would~~, if unretarded, put the region into the lead with the highest of growth in a decade's time.

^{1/} Report on the World Social Situation (United Nations Publication; Sales No.: 1957.IV.3), Chapter II.

53. 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. For example in Kenya, it has been shown that if fertility is not reduced in the next 25 years, the number of illiterate children will double even with all the efforts that the Government could exert. The policy statement on population of Ghana mentions that if the number of births could be cut by 2 per cent each year, there could be almost two million fewer in 1985, over 3 million fewer children in 2000, thus freeing funds for other types of investment and also increasing the proportion of children who complete primary education.

54. Realization is coming surely if slowly. The situation in which the countries find themselves in an Alice-in-the-Looking-Glass-World has been stated in the Ugandan development plan: "Uganda must keep moving in order to stay in the same place. Growth in output and employment of nearly 3 per cent per annum is necessary in order to main per capita standards and hence for increasing per capita income an even higher rate of growth has to be achieved".

55. Mention should be made of the Resolution 2211(XXI) unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1966 which recognized the sovereignty of nations in formulating and promoting their own population policies with due regard to the principle that the size of the family should be according to the free choice of each individual family and the Resolution 1347(XLV) of the economic and social council of 1968 which recognized the importance of giving appropriate attention to the inter-relations of economic, social and demographic factors in formulating development programmes and the need for the UN and its agencies to assist the developing countries, upon request, in dealing with problems arising use of the current and prospective population trends, and in formulating and promoting national policies of their own choice in the field of population.

VIII. Population Policy and Programme:

56. "The Conference of African Planners", meeting in Addis Ababa in 1967, directed the attention of African governments to the need for evolving population policies. The regional meeting on "Technical and Social Problems of Urbanization", recommended in 1969, that the attention of African planners should be drawn to the need of African countries to adopt individual population policies in order to reduce the effects of rapid rates of growth of total and urban population.

The seminar on the "Application of Demographic Data and Analysis to Development Planning", held in Addis Ababa, June 1969, recommended not only that the population factor be an integral part of the development process, but also whenever necessary family planning be used to supplement economic factors aimed at raising the level of the welfare of the people.

57. To date, six African countries, UAR, Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Ghana, and Botswana have official population policies whose growth by reducing fertility through family planning. In Nigeria a national population policy is in a process.

58. Evaluation is an essential tool for assessment and further improvement of existing family planning programme. Compilation and analyses of statistics of the number of persons accepting methods of contraception and their characteristics are essential for the evaluation of the degree of response to the programme and for figuring out the major causes for non-response. The use of the family planning clinic card such as the one developed by the Kenya Family Planning Programme may be applicable for this purposes.^{1/} The overall evaluation of the programme on the national level of fertility is undertaken through the fertility surveys.

59. As has been observed earlier, a large number of African countries are very concerned with the rapid rate of urbanization growth and the concentration of urban population in the capital cities and consequently the increasing amount of unemployment. As an example of these measures is the Senegal's programme of population redistribution and settlement in new lands and Zambia's programme for encouraging the surplus urban dweller to return back to rural and mining areas.

IX. Summary:

60. A number of summary features emerge from the foregoing:

(1) Demographic statistics in most African countries are still inadequate and unreliable. Greater efforts and special considerations should be given by the African governments for the collection, processing and analysis of demographic data. Particular emphasis should be put on the importance of the initiation and the improvement of the vital registration system.

^{1/} For further information concerning the processing and analysis, of family planning data, consult, Ross Stephen and Watson, A Handbook for Service Statistics in Family Planning Programme, Population Council, N.Y.

- (2) Africa has the lowest degree of urbanization among all regions of the world, but her average rate of urbanization growth is the highest. This requires a policy and a programme for population redistribution, improving the rural milieu and decentralization of industries.
- (3) It is clear from available data that levels of fertility are very high in all African countries. Due to the appreciable efforts being made by all African governments and the United Nations agencies for improving the health conditions and nutrition for the majority of African population, the mortality rates are dropping down rapidly and likely to decline further which will result in a higher rate of population growth and more government expenditures on social overheads which will decrease the share of proper economic development in the transformation available resources.
- (4) High proportion of young population, as a consequence of constant and high fertility, results in high dependency ratio and heavy load on the working population. The high rate of population growth is responsible for the big supply of labour force which overweights the labour market demand. Meanwhile, there is a shortage of trained and skilled labourers and a heavy reliance on expatriates especially for the technical and professional jobs.
- (5) Demographic factors and their effects on economic and social development need to be given more attention in the plans of African countries. Consideration of these factors is of utmost importance for its direct effect on production through the supply of manpower requirements and on the consumption levels. They are also essential for educational planning, health and social services and trade development etc.
- (6) Population trends should be the subject of a deliberate and comprehensive policy based on national and regional demographic surveys and studies, in countries seeking to raise the standard of living of their people through social and economic planning.
- (7) In view of the importance of population growth and its effect on economic growth, some African countries had adopted policies for encouraging population limitation and had inaugurated family planning programmes for the implementation of these policies.