

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
MANPOWER AND TRAINING SECTION
ADDIS ABABA

March 1973

NOTE ON
ACTION GUIDELINES TOWARD THE LOCALIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATION, TRAINING, EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATION
IN AFRICAN STATES

Background

The memorandum issued by the Economic Commission for Africa in December 1972 on "Policy Guidelines for the Localization in African States of Professional Education, Training, Examination and Certification of Managerial, Administrative, Executive and Supervisory Personnel" (copy attached) indicated, in broad terms, the main policy objectives and proposals for the localization of several professional qualifications, in order to ensure a supply of professionally qualified personnel adequate to the needs of African economies. It further indicated the type of possible technical assistance available within and outside the United Nations system that African Governments might take advantage of to achieve the policy objectives.

Reactions to the proposals contained in the memorandum so far received from a number of African Governments and universities as well as from professional associations and technical assistance bodies outside Africa, were unanimous in commending the proposal to promote the localization of professional training in Africa. Several of the professional and technical assistance bodies in a position to help have indicated their willingness to consider specific requests for assistance.

Purpose

The present follow-up Note attempts to spell out what measures and action need to be considered and taken at various stages of the implementation of national policies and programmes for the full realization of the object of localizing professional qualifications. It is intended to facilitate the task of those who will be entrusted with the responsibility of interpreting and translating the policy objectives outlined

in the memorandum into meaningful, operational guidelines and concrete programmes closely related to peculiar national circumstances.

The operational guidelines and suggested measures which this note attempts to elaborate may be set out in clear steps as follows:

- (i) the present situation in the localization of professional qualifications;
- (ii) localizing curricula and examinations;
- (iii) statutory and organizational measures;
- (iv) recruitment and development of teaching staff;
- (v) development of instruction manuals and textbooks;
- (vi) apprenticeship for practical professional training;
- (vii) financing localization of professional qualifications.

The present situation in the localization of professional qualifications

Countries taking the initial steps toward the localization of professional qualifications and those with fairly advanced programmes in this respect need to ask critical questions on the actual status of their localization effort. This calls for a situation study of what exists, what has been achieved and how satisfactory are the results. What are the immediate and future needs for professionally qualified personnel and how effective (quantitatively and qualitatively) are existing training institutions coping with the demand? In which professional occupations are local training arrangements adequate, poorly developed or not provided? Do the relations and practices of established professional associations indicate supply constraints? Are institutional and administrative arrangements for the promotion of professional training operating efficiently and satisfactorily? Are admission requirements suitable? What recognition is given to the qualifications by Government, Industry and Commerce?

This situation review calls for the identification of sources of weakness and omissions in policies, programmes and institutional structure for the localization of professional qualifications, as well as for decisions on remedial measures. It may require a re-examination of

current manpower surveys and assessments of requirements of professional personnel in all sectors in order to determine whether the estimates are realistic, and to ensure effective localization in critical professional occupations.

Localizing curricula and examinations

A major step toward the localization of professional training is to adjust curricula and examinations as well as training methods and schemes to meet local conditions and personnel requirements. This requires a dialogue and permanent liaison with university authorities and heads of professional bodies and training institutes. It is equally necessary to identify existing institutions with the right base for training in various professional fields. It is suggested that national universities, through their Business Schools, engineering, architecture and surveying departments, and extension classes, can and should play a major role in professional training and curricula development. This should extend to the designing of training schemes, the determination of national professional standards and qualifications, duration of training, and the relationship between academic and practical training requirements.

Countries at the early stages of localization could initiate training programmes and courses in the more critical intermediate level professional occupations. They could use local university and training institutes, while still taking advantage of external facilities for higher-level professional training. Modern training media, including the use of radio, television and correspondence courses to supplement classroom work should be considered. Local and foreign scholarship programmes may be deployed to train the senior cadres of the required professions in overseas training institutes, or in those of other African countries.

Countries at a relatively more advanced stage of localization might concentrate on curricula and examinations development for the higher professional levels, as well as for the least localized and new professional fields. In doing this due consideration should be given to the

manpower requirements of each country. Here again national universities can, with proper guidance from government departments, commerce, industry, and professional bodies, give the leadership in developing training programmes and curricula.

Statutory and organizational measures

The situation review can be carried out by each country with its own resources, using the professional bodies, training institutions, universities and senior administrative cadres. Countries with some experience of localization, where National Examination Councils and professional institutes or councils are already firmly established, should consider initiating a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of their existing arrangements. They should pay particular attention to their ability to expand training programmes and extend localization to new professional occupations. They should adopt measures for achieving more effective co-ordination of policies and programmes for training in various professional fields.

In countries where no central bodies or national councils for the registration and regulation of professional associations already exist, and where there are no statutory professional examination boards at least for the most critical professional fields in which localization of qualifications is desired, it is imperative that action should be taken to make these statutory arrangements. These bodies are to be established not to protect the interests of any professional group, but to promote the growth of professional capability and to ensure the adequate supply of professional personnel required by the economy. Action for the promotion of professional associations may be taken, pari passu, with efforts directed to formulating administrative and legislative measures. These measures should aim at the establishment of examination boards and panels and a national council for overall control and guidance in the development of professional training.

Countries that have established professional councils and examination boards would need to review the scope, operation and effectiveness of their arrangements with a view to eliminating any identified vested interests and bottlenecks. There is a need to have all sectional

professional councils and examination boards under the policy guidance of a central national council for professional registration and certification. The existence of individual examination boards provides an opportunity to professional bodies to influence the content and orientation of curricula, and promote the maintenance of professional standards.

Recruitment and development of teaching staff

Where such staff is in short supply, recourse will have to be had to bilateral assistance and university staff exchange programmes. Training programmes will have to be expanded to provide on-the-job training for local counterparts.

Development of instruction manuals and textbooks

The objective of localized curricula could be defeated either by lack of textbooks and instruction materials derived from local socio-economic environment or by indiscriminate use of imported textbooks. A principal task of the national council for the registration and certification of professional training, the examination boards, and of professional associations, all acting co-operatively, is to prescribe course books and instruction manuals for use in particular professional training courses. They should also promote local authorship, and the development and publication of needed textbooks. Use could be made of imported foreign manuals and textbooks which experienced trainers could adapt to local conditions. While national action is needed in the preparation of manuals and textbooks at the sub-professional level, a measure of multinational co-operation and exchange of experience in the development of textbooks for professional training at the higher level deserves consideration. National universities and professional bodies have a role to play in the implementation of any programme of textbook writing for use at courses.

Apprenticeship for practical professional training

Lack of opportunity for graduate apprenticeship or training under articles with established firms of practising professionals has for long been recognized as the real barrier to increased output of professionals

qualified to practice. Expanded local training opportunities and the localization of curricula and examinations alone will not be effective in meeting the economy's demand for more qualified practising professionals. There must also be adequate local opportunities for persons academically qualified to obtain practical professional experience under the guidance of well established professionals in their respective fields. Government departments, public corporations and private enterprises (commerce and industry) are the agents that provide the opportunities for professional experience on the job.

Government policy support is needed to enable graduate apprentices to utilize to the fullest opportunities for acquiring practical experience in the public sector. The services of the not-yet-professionally-qualified accountants, architects, surveyors etc. can be used in many central and local government undertakings and in parastatal enterprises. They can be employed as trainees under the close supervision of qualified and experienced professionals. In the private sector, chambers of commerce and industries and professional associations have a major role to play in prevailing on their member firms to accept academically qualified persons for articleship. Government encouragement through tax incentives may facilitate the admission of trainees.

Any arrangement for apprenticeship should provide for those trained at home and abroad. As has been the case of internship for legal and medical graduates in some West African countries, persons trained abroad should be obliged to have a period of local apprenticeship back home.

Co-operation among the user agents and professional bodies under the leadership of the national council for the registration of professional qualifications is essential. This will help to determine the length of apprenticeship for each professional occupation, giving due regard to the amount of practical training already incorporated in university or institutional training programmes.

It is suggested that efforts toward expanding opportunities for local articleship should be initiated as soon as action is taken to provide local training courses up to the final examinations level of

any given profession. It is not necessary to wait for the full fledged statutory and administrative arrangements to be set up before giving nationals opportunities to get professional training on the job.

Financing localization of professional qualifications

Relevant questions likely to forestall any localization programme are: How much will it cost? Where will the money come from? Every African country can with determination afford to localize professional qualifications. A way must be found to produce the right quality, quantity and type of professionals needed by the economy. To fail to do so for lack of funds is being penny wise. As indicated earlier existing institutional facilities can go a long way to provide new and expanded training courses with little additional resources. The goodwill of local business firms and professional associations offers a good source of local donations for programme development. These bodies stand to gain by localization and professional integrity in the long run.

Further attention is called to the prevailing external goodwill toward the localization of professional training in Africa. A number of professional associations and technical assistance agencies outside Africa are ready to consider specific requests for the supply of technical advisers, training fellowships for staff development and assistance in developing curricula and courses. Countries interested in taking advantage of the opportunity offered by external technical assistance may approach the ECA.

ECA's role

Encouraged by the favourable reactions to the memorandum of December 1972, the ECA secretariat intends to accord high priority to the localization of professional qualifications programme. ECA will be pleased to assist in mobilizing bilateral technical assistance for countries so requesting.

Countries with little or no experience in training localization may also seek technical assistance from United Nations Agencies to:

- (i) evaluate requirements of professional personnel and training needs;
- (ii) determine technical assistance requirements in precise terms for follow-up action and for localization programme development;
- (iii) formulate programmes, curricula and training schemes for the initial phase of localization of professional qualifications;
- (iv) advise on the organization of professional associations.

Any country wishing to do so may seek United Nations assistance by including a localization programme in its Indicative Planning Figure of the UNDP country programme of technical assistance.

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MEMORANDUM ON POLICY GUIDELINES
FOR THE
LOCALIZATION IN AFRICAN STATES
OF
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATION
OF
MANAGERIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, EXECUTIVE AND SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

December 1972

Purpose

1. This memorandum seeks to focus attention upon critical shortages in the supply of professionally qualified, experienced and capable Africans in certain managerial, administrative, executive, supervisory and related categories of manpower. The Economic Commission for Africa considers these categories of manpower to be of strategic importance (i) to the completion of the movement begun in member States towards localization of personnel employed at different levels in the public and private sectors of the economy, and (ii) to provide for the efficient management of rapid expansion and modernization of the economy. It is hoped to stimulate thought and vigorous action at the national level during the 1970s for the localization of institutional arrangements and facilities for the education, training, examination and certification of such key personnel. It is envisaged that such arrangements would ensure that their professional preparation is relevant to the needs and requirements of African countries, that their standard of competence and job performance is high enough to cope with the responsibilities they will be entrusted with, and that there will be an output of such personnel from local training institutions to meet the normal demands of the economy. The memorandum concludes with the forms of assistance which the Economic Commission for Africa, in co-operation and collaboration with multilateral and bilateral agencies, is in a position to offer member States, at their request.

Training Objectives for the Second Development Decade

2. The policy of staff localization adopted in many African States during the 1960s has met with sufficient success to encourage further development. This was largely a process of substitution of non-citizen cadres by citizen cadres, a necessary first step to increase the effective participation of citizens in national development. More frequently than not the citizen cadres appointed to positions of responsibility have had to cope with tasks of modern management in the public sector without having had the benefit of the necessary formal professional training and/or practical work experience. That the transition has been effected without serious dislocation or collapse of the services is a testimony to African potential and aptitude for managerial and executive tasks. Inevitably, there have been cases of failure in the discharge of managerial and executive responsibilities, both in the public and private sectors, but a more widespread kind of failure appears to have been in the nature of non-implementation or non-fulfilment of indicated policy measures. To a great extent the weaknesses at the higher management level have been compounded by the very great shortage of supporting cadres, such as book-keepers, accounting and administrative clerks, cashiers, junior executive secretaries and so on.

3. A fairly large number of citizens appointed after independence to senior positions are in situ. One of the major objectives of training is to give high priority to improving their formal professional

qualifications and their competence to perform the job more efficiently. It follows that training policy ought to provide training facilities, opportunities to take advantage of them, and the incentives for self development, especially for those already employed.

4. In addition, a longer term training objective must be concerned with resolving the problem of ensuring an adequate local supply of suitably qualified and trained professionals and sub-professionals for employment in the private sector.

5. As in so many other areas of education and training of the labour force, the demand of prospective employers is that the content of the academic studies should be relevant to the situations and problems that arise in the African country concerned, and equally that the gap between theory and preparedness for practical applications be narrowed. Relevance of academic content may be realized gradually by encouraging the preparation of instructional materials based upon African experience, supplemented where possible by comparable materials from elsewhere.

6. The other aspect of making training more practical is essentially a matter of the adoption of appropriate teaching procedures. A time tested approach to ensuring practical work experience in day to day operational situations is to insist upon a period of approved articleship or apprenticeship with an approved employer before the final award of a certificate of professional competence by the authorized statutory body. In the actual implementation of this policy many problems are likely to be encountered, especially in identifying and securing the co-operation of private establishments. Therefore, the task of recruiting and nurturing new entrants to the practice of the specialized professions must be seen as a continuing responsibility of the organized profession to which certain statutory recognition is given.

Professional Cadres of Strategic Importance to
African Economic and Social Development

7. The long established and traditionally accepted professions of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, law and teaching have already localized the education, training, examination and certification of their members. This memorandum is concerned with an equally vital class of professions which have emerged into importance with the growing size and complexity of modern governmental operations and modern corporate business and industrial undertakings, often with increasing multinational and international dimensions in the scope of their activities. Some of the professionals may establish private practice to serve the public. But there is need for increasing numbers to be trained

for service with governments and parastatal organizations. It is widely recognized that the functions that they perform and the levels of the organization at which they perform these functions are strategic and crucial to the successful management and development of systems of production and services.

8. These functions, which are regarded as aspects of management, include: accounting; costing; budgeting; auditing; marketing; revenue raising; materials purchasing and supply; real estate purchase, development and maintenance; records and information systems; personnel employment and training; insurance and valuation; and public relations. Each function calls for the acquisition of a body of specialized knowledge, skills and working experience to attain a high level of expertise.

9. A short listing of the categories of such professionals (and sub-professionals to support them) in scarce supply in every African State would include the following:

1. Accountants, auditors; book-keepers
2. Company secretaries; executives of public corporate bodies and institutions.
3. Taxation and revenue systems administrators; collectors; inspectors.
4. Monetary, banking and allied financial institutions managers.
5. Insurance brokers, appraisers, and allied specialists.
6. General and Specialist Management Personnel (for Government, local authorities, business, industry, agriculture, transport and communications, social services).
7. Training systems administrators and trainers.

Existing Arrangements for Professional Education, Training, Examination and Certification

10. Heavy reliance continues to be placed upon entry into the professional areas mentioned above through the acquisition of certificates and diplomas awarded by institutes or societies based outside Africa. These are old and established institutions with an international standing which makes for wider acceptance of their certificates and diplomas.

11. There are undoubtedly great advantages to the individual graduate who manages to secure such accreditation of professional competence and

reliability. These advantages must be weighed against the high quantitative needs of Africa, and also by the equally pressing need to tailor the curricula, content and training methods to the practical requirements of African Governments and private establishments. A few countries like Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, for example, are in the process of localizing the education, training, examination and certification of public accountants and public secretaries, and have the beginnings of national statutory institutes with powers to train, examine and award certificates. The Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants (Nigeria) are examples of such bodies in West Africa, which conduct their own examinations in some collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Britain. The universities and polytechnics in these countries prepare Accountancy students both for the examinations of the local Institutes of Chartered Accountants and for overseas Accountancy bodies.

12. Until 1969 there was no statutory body within East Africa which performed such functions locally in the Accountancy and Secretarial professions. The Association of Accountants in East Africa was the recognized professional body for Accountancy but its membership depended upon the possession of qualifications obtained in countries outside Africa. The Government of Kenya, finding that this arrangement did not suit its need for accelerated training programmes to meet the shortage of public accountants and secretaries, had set up in July 1969 the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board. The Board has been planning, setting and marking all Accountancy and Secretarial Examinations in Kenya, in co-operation with the local university, university-level institutions and professional interests. To date examinations covering a Technical Certificate for Accounts Clerks, Administrative Clerks, and Parts I and II of the Professional Examination have been set. As of March 1972 over 600 students were reported to have registered for the Board's Professional Examinations. There is reason to believe that some students in neighbouring countries may register for the Board's examinations.

13. However, in the newly independent States of southern Africa the movement for localization of arrangements and facilities for professional training is far less advanced, and in some other countries it has not begun.

Recommendations for Further Development of Localization of Professional Training

14. There is no doubt that the training policies already initiated and implemented in some East and West African countries for the local education, training, examination and certification of public accountants and secretaries, and related sub-professional cadres would need to be continued, expanded and diversified progressively to cover the various strategic specialist disciplines.

National Council for Registration of Professional Associations

15. It would seem desirable to set up permanent institutional machinery in the form of a National Council for the registration of professional bodies and associations. Among other tasks, the Council would regulate examination standards, evaluate certificates and diplomas, and generally advise Government on standards of professional code and ethics.

National Statutory Professional Examination Boards

16. The actual responsibility for localizing professional education, training, examination and certification will be delegated to a number of examination boards whose functions, powers, and liabilities will be defined by statute, very much along the lines of existing boards in the areas of medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacy, nursing, accountancy and auditing, architecture, engineering, and so on. The membership of each examination board will be drawn largely from the particular profession, education and training institutions. In general such examination boards (or institutes and associations with examining and certifying powers) would determine the curricula and syllabuses, indicate the duration of articleship or apprenticeship; approve the practitioner or organization under whom articles or apprenticeship are to be served; draft examinations regulations; appoint examiners who will set and mark papers; conduct examinations; and, award certificates in its own right or on behalf of a superior co-ordinating national body. In the discharge of these functions, it would be advantageous for African-based examination boards to establish and retain technical, consultative and co-operative links with similar professional examining and certifying bodies in other African countries as well as in countries outside Africa, especially with their historical counterpart organizations.

Sub-Committees or Specialist Panels of Examination Boards

17. It may often be necessary for a particular professional examination board (say, in accountancy, money and banking, insurance or management) to arrange for examination and certification in recognized or widely demanded sub-specialities of the profession (as for example, costs and management accounting, auditing, public accounting - central or local; business, industrial, public, personnel, purchase and supply, taxation management). In such instances, a board could appoint a sub-committee or panel of specialists to advise it on curricula, syllabuses and the appointment of a panel of examiners, and may, if necessary, delegate the conduct of the examination on its behalf. In developing countries like Africa, the proliferation of a number of independent institutes (with examining and certifying powers) for sub-specializations should be avoided at this early stage of their development.

Professional Associations

18. Historically professional associations have played a protective rôle in the interests of their members and of the public whom they are called upon to serve. In the course of discharging this responsibility, they have also been endowed with training, examination and certifying powers. Where there is already a sufficient number of practitioners this dual rôle can be effective but not when we have to create the local base itself of practitioners. In this case, initiatives for the training, examination and certification aspect would need to be taken over by a nationally appointed council and its subordinate statutory examination boards. In the course of time, as the numbers of practising professionals justify it, an association is most likely to emerge and, at that time, the question of delegating the training, examining and certifying responsibilities to it may be reviewed. Where such chartered organizations already exist and are active in all respects, it becomes a matter of establishing co-ordinating links with the national council.

19. International acceptability of African-based certification, particularly in countries outside Africa, ought not to be allowed to be a critical consideration in the pursuit of a localization policy, though at all times the examination boards shall be expected to maintain high and realistic standards. In the final analysis standards are established by professional competence on-the-job to the satisfaction of the employing clientele.

Priority Measures

20. In practice, however, a localization policy does not necessarily mean a radical break with established links with counterpart institutes overseas nor a complete abandonment of existing curricula, syllabuses and instructional material but in the main prudent modification, adaptation and even innovation are called for. It should, however, be stressed that the attainment of the objectives of localization is very much dependent upon giving urgent attention and support to these priority measures:

- (i) the promotion and establishment of training programmes in the numerically and qualitatively deficient professions through existing universities, institutes and polytechnics, for full-time and part-time students, utilizing, wherever necessary and feasible, correspondence tuition, supplemented by radio and television. It is envisaged that post-secondary level institutions will considerably expand and diversify the course offerings in their extension studies divisions.

- (ii) The identification and compilation of an approved list of local establishments and practitioners under whom practical work experience may be obtained by candidates towards their professional certification, and the conduct of negotiations with them directly or through their associations to accept trainees and co-operate with the policy of localizing professional training.
- (iii) The establishment of appropriate institutional and administrative arrangements to promote professional training and certification, to co-ordinate training policies and programmes, and the overall supervision of professional conduct.

International Assistance to Member States

21. It is recognized and acknowledged that responsibility for decision and action on the matters raised in this memorandum rest with the governments of member States. Attention has been drawn to this aspect of African manpower problems in the spirit of Commission Resolution 218(X): Africa's Strategy for Development in the 1970s and to encourage member States to draw upon the resources of the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations system in general in the speedy resolution of the problem. The Economic Commission for Africa, in co-operation with other organs and agencies of the UN system, is willing, at the request of member States, to advise and assist in the following respects:

- (a) determining personnel needs and type of training to be instituted;
- (b) setting up of the necessary mechanisms for the running of the professional institutes and associations, and overall national control of the activities of such bodies.
- (c) organising, in co-operation with and under the sponsorship of commercial, industrial, government training and educational bodies, periodical training courses, conferences, meetings, working groups and seminars as appropriate to meet the needs of member States under the scheme.

Conclusion

22. It is hoped that by the adoption of energetic measures to ensure a steady local supply of managerial and professional personnel of the categories mentioned in this memorandum, and of others that may be identified by member States themselves, one of the crucial constraints to rapid economic and social development will be removed.