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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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STATISTICAL DIVISION

REPORT ON A CONSULTANCY ASSIGNMENT

**African Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of
Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems
Rabat, Morocco, 4-8 December 1995**

By

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Consultant, UNSD

Antananarivo, 28 December 1995

Terms of reference

I was recruited by the United Nations as a consultant for the African Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, for selected French-speaking countries, held in Rabat, Morocco from 4-8 December 1995.

In accordance with the terms of reference of my assignment, transmitted to me by Mr Victor Lioubomirov, Recruitment Officer, Project Management and Training Service, Department for Development Support and Management Services, I was expected to perform the following tasks:

- a) to assist the United Nations Statistical Division to conduct the African Workshop referred to above in French, servicing all Workshop sessions;
- b) to ensure that translations and interpretations from French into English and vice-versa are properly done;
- c) to prepare the Workshop Report in French.

Organisation of the consultancy mission

All the details concerning the administrative and financial arrangements for my assignment were arranged on time by Mr Victor Lioubomirov and the United Nations Statistical Division. I left Antananarivo on 26 November 1995 and arrived in Paris on 27 November. I applied for entrance visa to Morocco through the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Paris. This proved to be useful as some participants had encountered difficulties on their arrival in Morocco without any visa, although prior arrangements had been made on this subject by the organisers of the Workshop with the local Organizing Committee. I arrived in Rabat on 1 December 1995, together with Mr Rene Rakotobe, UNECA representative. We immediately contacted Ms Violeta Gonzales-Diaz, from the UN Statistical Division, who briefed us about the arrangements for the Workshop. Working sessions were also held with some members of the local Organizing Committee as well as with the representatives of the UN Statistical Division (Mr Y C Yu, Mrs Alice Clague and Mrs Violeta Gonzales-Diaz) at the Tour Hassan Hotel on 2 and 3 December 1995 respectively.

The Workshop

The Workshop was attended by 61 participants, including 25 from African countries, 7 from developed countries, 2 from non governmental organizations, 11 from international and regional organization and 16 observers from Morocco.

As expected, I assisted the UN Statistical Division in the conduct of the Workshop, servicing all sessions. I contributed to the discussions and assisted the Chairman and the members of his Bureau in running the meeting.

It is regretted that the main room allocated to the Workshop was not quite convenient for simultaneous interpretation and the interpretation equipment was defective. I had to assist, on several occasions, non French-speaking participants from developed countries in the translation of questions from other participants following the presentation of their papers. Otherwise, I found that the interpreters were very good. I made arrangements with them, before the start of the meeting, for consultations on technical issues as necessary.

The Plan of Action for the Improvement of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System was finalised and distributed following its adoption by the participants. A draft report including background information on the Workshop, participation and organisation of work, agenda, opening speeches, national reports on the current status of the civil registration and vital statistics systems and strategies for their improvement, list of participants and timetable was also prepared and distributed to all participants during the closing session.

I worked with Mrs Gonzales-Diaz, UNSD, and Mr Rakotobe, UNECA, during the period 9-12 December 1995 to prepare and finalize the comprehensive report. I was also assisted in this task by Ms Anne-Marie Bakyono, UNECA, Mr Jean-Marc Hie, CST-Addis Ababa, and Mr Andre Mayouya, CST-Dakar before their departure from Rabat.

Despite all good will, it was not possible to finalize the whole report in Rabat. Only one secretary was made available to us on 11 and 12 December 1995. It should be pointed out, however, that two secretaries and two supporting staff worked with us on Saturday morning 9 December. Also, a number of contributions to the report had to be translated into French.

I left Rabat on 12 December 1995, in the afternoon. I had to complete the work in Paris and Antananarivo.

I have the pleasure to submit herewith the Final Report of the Workshop, on floppy disk WP51 and hard copy, for clearance and distribution to all concerned. I am sending to ECA some suggestions to improve the Report before its reproduction.

Conclusions

According to the results of the evaluation by the participants, the Workshop was generally a success. All the participants indicated that the objectives of the Workshop had been realized, either fully or partially. Most of them (83 percent) thought that the Workshop was very relevant for their job.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the representatives of the UN Statistical Division, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Country Support Teams in Addis Ababa and Dakar for their valuable assistance in the preparation of the report of the Workshop. I would also like to express my gratitude to the representatives of developed countries for preparing short summaries of their papers for the Report and to the Director of Statistics and the Chief, Centre for Demographic Studies and Research, and their staff for their kind assistance.\