

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

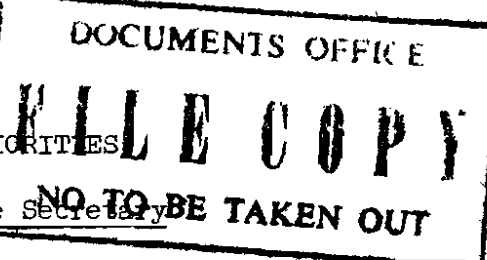
E/CN.14/4  
19 November 1958

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
FIRST SESSION

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND PRIORITIES

Memorandum by the Executive Secretary



INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Council at its twenty-fifth session adopted resolution 671 (XXV) establishing an Economic Commission for Africa and setting out its functions as follows:

- (a) Initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects, with a view to raising the level of economic activity and levels of living in Africa, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of countries and territories of Africa, both among themselves and with other countries of the world;
- (b) Make or sponsor such investigations and studies of economic and technological problems and developments within the territories of Africa as the Commission deems appropriate, and disseminate the results of such investigations and studies;
- (c) Undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technological and statistical information as the Commission deems appropriate;
- (d) Perform within the available resources of its secretariat, such advisory services as the countries and territories of the region may desire, provided that such services do not overlap with those rendered by other bodies of the United Nations or by the specialized agencies;

- (e) Assist the Council at its request in discharging its functions within the region in connexion with any economic problems, including problems in the field of technical assistance;
- (f) Assist in the formulation and development of co-ordinated policies as a basis for practical action in promoting economic and technological development in the region;
- (g) In carrying out the above functions, deal as appropriate with the social aspects of economic development and the interrelationship of economic and social factors.
2. With the co-operation of all Governments in Africa, important progress towards economic development should be possible under the stimulus of the Commission. Such methods as are being successfully employed in the solution of current problems must be vigorously pursued. But it is equally, if not more, important that the active consideration of new approaches to common problems and particularly the general problem of development be given very high priority in the Commission's work. Such new approaches may arise not only from the thinking of member and associate member Governments and of the Secretariat, but also from the exchange of ideas between government officials and outside experts. It will be one of the major tasks of the Commission to facilitate and promote such exchange of views.
3. In considering its work programme, the Commission will doubtless wish to bear in mind the nature and scope of current work being undertaken by the United Nations itself and the specialized agencies in respect of Africa.<sup>1/</sup> The Commission will also have the benefit of the presence of representatives of the agencies during the session.

#### CONCERTED ACTION

4. The terms of reference of the Commission and views expressed by individual Governments in debates in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council emphasize the importance of the Commission being concerned with

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<sup>1/</sup> Summarized in "Summary of Current Programmes of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies relating to Africa" (E/CN.14/5).

concerted action among its member and associate member Governments. The Commission should provide considerable opportunities for the pooling of information on, and discussion of, common problems which can lead to the undertaking of joint projects which countries or groups of countries in the region will find mutually beneficial. Experience in other regional economic commissions also supports the view that the promotion of such concerted action may be a prime function of the Commission. In the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), for example, concerted action has made possible the launching of the Mekong scheme which is a first step towards the comprehensive development of the water resources in the lower Mekong basin. A Committee of Co-ordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin, composed of representatives of the four countries concerned and serviced by the ECAFE secretariat, has been established. For the purpose of furthering this work the Executive Secretary of ECAFE has been authorized to discuss with interested Governments the extent, form and pattern of assistance which they could make available. Financial assistance from the United Nations Technical Assistance Board has made possible the provision of services of specialists from the United Nations and specialized agencies. Financial assistance from the United Nations Special Fund may also be sought in furthering the project. Another example of concerted action may be given from the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), where a programme of economic integration for Central America is being carried out jointly by the five countries of the region through an Economic Co-operation Committee composed of the Ministers of Economy of those countries. The Committee, which was established in 1951 under the auspices of the Commission, is serviced by the ECLA Secretariat and receives in addition the full collaboration of the appropriate agencies participating under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. The integration scheme completed its first major phase in 1958 with the signature by the participating Governments of a Multilateral Free Trade and Economic Integration Treaty. On a broader scale are the discussions and studies at present being conducted by ECLA, aimed towards the eventual creation of a Latin American regional common market. Concerted action by Member Governments has also been from time to time an important feature of the work of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). An example of concerted action

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by this Commission is provided by the "Yougelexport" programme which is intended to enable Yugoslavia's hydroelectric resources, only a small part of which are exploited for internal consumption, to be made available to other nearby countries whose hydroelectric resources are almost fully utilized. To this end, an inter-governmental research agency in which Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Yugoslavia participate, has been established. This agency has prepared projects for the establishment of hydroelectric power stations in Yugoslavia and of a transmission network for the export of power on a large scale.

5. These examples are given to show that from the experience of the other regional commissions, a useful and flexible means for inter-governmental consultation can be provided with the assistance of the technical services of the United Nations Secretariat. The opportunities which the Commission presents for concerted action in Africa may be all the greater because of the early stage of development of many of the member states and the identity of interests which they share. The kinds of projects suitable for Africa may of course be totally different from the kinds of projects suitable in other regions and those projects which are to be selected by the Commission for study in Africa will depend entirely on the decisions of the Commission and on the agreement of the Governments concerned.

#### OTHER FUNCTIONS

6. Whilst the scope of concerted action, as defined above, cannot be determined in advance and will depend largely on the initiative of Governments or groups of Governments, there are other important functions inherent in the Commission which the Secretariat can help formulate at this stage, and for the discharge of which steps can immediately be taken. These functions can be summarized under three main heads: the provision of information research and statistical services, the provision of training, and the provision of advisory services and related assistance to Governments.

7. In interpreting the terms of reference, the Executive Secretary has been guided by a number of factors. Among the most important of these was the experience of the three other regional commissions, each with an important

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record of activities which were determined by the nature of the problems of the respective regions and their terms of reference. There was also the experience of United Nations Headquarters and the specialized agencies in dealing with specific economic and social questions over the last twelve years, in such fields as industrialization, agriculture, finance, resource development, health, education, labour, community development, housing and urbanization. In addition, the work carried out under the regular and expanded programme of technical assistance indicated certain administrative and technical methods which have achieved results in a number of countries and in a variety of subjects. Moreover, there was the experience of the members and associate members of the Commission and of bodies engaged in the economic problems of Africa, as well as the research conducted in the many universities and other scientific and technical institutions, both within and outside Africa.

8. The respective importance of information research, and statistical services, training and advisory services in the work of the Commission may be expected to vary in the course of time. In present circumstances, however, the Commission may consider that its programme of work should involve emphasis on advice and assistance to Governments in substantive fields, on training facilities and on analytical work based on statistical enquiries and other research. For this reason, while provision is made in the work programme for periodic publications, the frequency of such publications has been left for later decision.

(a) Advisory Services and Related Assistance

9. Experience shows that there is a demand for a wide variety of advisory services in countries undergoing the process of development, particularly those having recently emerged into independence. The machinery set up during the last ten years under the concept of technical assistance by the United Nations family of organizations is designed to meet an important fraction of those demands. It has become increasingly clear, however, that there is a need to supplement the existing machinery with the development, on a permanent basis, of centres of competence in various fields relating to economic development, for the object of providing consultative services, mainly in the form of short term missions available on short notice, to Governments requesting assistance of this type.

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Such consultative services would be designed to provide prompt answers to questions raised by Governments in their search for solutions to their multiple day-to-day problems, by pointing out how similar problems are being dealt with elsewhere and what the results of different types of experience have been. They could also assist Governments in analysing and defining the various elements of a problem as a first step in the formulation of requests for technical assistance under the United Nations programmes, and in advising on the selection of experts. The organization of such services within the secretariat of the Commission would be supplementary to and would in no way overlap the existing programmes of technical assistance; they would be co-ordinated with the existing machinery for the administration of these programmes. It should be recognized that the provision of such services can only gradually be developed. It may be possible to recruit immediately a small number of staff having the necessary competence in a number of fields; however, for the most part, knowledge and experience will have to be developed on the spot. In any case, staff required to give such consultative services would be expected to carry out, as part of their responsibilities, the continuing study and analysis of the problems arising in their field of competence, with the object of improving their own performance in their advice to governments, and of working out and disseminating studies, reports or manuals on various aspects of their work. Finally, it must be stressed that the organization of such advisory services should be able to draw upon the competence existing at Headquarters and that the development of this aspect of the work should be as far as possible conceived in the framework of an over-all programme within the organization as a whole, thereby ensuring the optimum utilization of scarce resources.

10. The provision of advisory services and related assistance may also include help to individual member countries in defining problems and selecting experts in particular fields. Such experts might include those for whom provision has been made in the recently authorized scheme designed to supplement existing technical assistance programmes by measures aimed at enabling Governments to secure, on a temporary basis, the services of well qualified persons to perform duties of an executive or operational character as the Governments may define. The range in which expert advice is available to Governments through international and other organizations is wide and member Governments can rely on the Secretariat

for information and assistance which should enable them to make the maximum use of the assistance available from these sources.

11. Finally, where common problems exist in several countries advice and assistance might be provided at the request of Governments, through the despatch of teams to all the countries concerned to examine the problem and report their findings and recommendations to the governments involved. Such a survey has been carried out in recent years in the field of community development in selected African countries and a report on the missions of experts is available.<sup>2/</sup>

(b) Training

12. One of the main problems in African countries is the lack of trained personnel in administrative, managerial and technical positions. Whilst a start has been made on training both by Governments and outside institutions, a great deal remains to be done.

13. Some facilities for training abroad have been provided for Africans through metropolitan and other Governments and through various foundations, institutions, and through private enterprise. Scholarships and other awards for this purpose are available from African and other countries. The Commission might wish to ensure that member Governments are kept informed of all the training facilities available and the fields in which training is provided, so that the maximum advantage can be taken of existing facilities. Those facilities are, however, clearly inadequate and the Commission may consider the encouragement of additional facilities to be one of its major tasks.

14. The siting of the Commission in Africa should make it possible to train an increasing number of Africans at its headquarters and at other centres in the continent. Such training might be in general fields such as economic administration aimed at providing for African governments a nucleus of trained economists in their civil services, or in more specific fields such as the training of statisticians and finance officers, or in social fields directly related to economic development. Short-period training projects might also be provided on subjects such as the classification and economic uses of government financial accounts.

15. Experience in other regions is of significance in this connexion. The success which has attended the establishment of a Statistical Training Centre at the University of the Philippines set up with the assistance of the United Nations, where students are trained to degree standards leading to post-graduate work abroad, and that of the Statistical Centre in Saigon where training in statistics at intermediate levels is provided, may encourage similar projects in Africa. With the experience gained in these earlier training schemes before them, the Commission may wish to consider whether a more ambitious scheme, linking statistical training with training in the allied field of economic and social research might be undertaken in Addis Ababa. Such a project might be expected not only to provide valuable training for participants but also to enable the Commission to draw on the first-hand knowledge of economic conditions in the countries of the participants. When such a project has been in operation for a reasonable period it may be found of considerable assistance to the Commission in carrying out its work programme. The Executive Secretary would also hope that such an institute would be available for consultation by individual Governments. A training centre of the kind envisaged would be operated in close co-operation with the regular work of the secretariat. Junior staff recruited for the secretariat might be given supplementary courses in the training centres and participants in the training centre would be called on as necessary for work on particular projects in the secretariat. The senior staff of the secretariat would also participate in the training scheme.

16. Seminars and working parties on specially selected topics may, if well prepared, be a good method of training. This is also true of teams of experts or of individuals assigned to Governments for particular purposes. The statistical team which it is proposed should visit countries and territories to advise on the establishment of statistical services would also advise on training. Other examples of projects with training as one of their main purposes are study tours in community development and seminars and workshops in urbanization and low-cost housing.

17. The In-service Training Programme for African government economists, which is currently in operation at United Nations Headquarters, is an example of the type of training abroad which may be of considerable benefit to member governments.

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The aim of this programme is to provide practical training for government economists in order to assist African Governments in developing a nucleus of trained economists in their civil service. It is also intended to enable participants to gain experience in international economic problems and methods of international consultation. The training given includes a course of guided reading on problems of under-developed countries, with special reference to Africa; a general lecture and discussion course on problems of development policy and development planning; a course on statistics, with special emphasis on the use of statistics in economic policy; work on individual assignments, under the supervision of staff members; meetings with Technical Assistance experts; attendance at suitable meetings, conferences, etc., and a visit to a country in the process of development. Visits are also made to other international organizations such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund, to government departments and universities in various countries as well as factories and private financial institutions.

18. Training schemes of these kinds, together with instruction in public administration such as is currently provided in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in Africa under the aegis of the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, can play a useful role in assisting in the provision of trained personnel for government administrations. A further area where training is urgently required relates to managerial positions in commercial firms and in public and semi-public corporations. Here training on the job or in a similar enterprise abroad is desirable. In the case of public utility corporations such as electricity or mining undertakings suitable training can more easily be provided than in that of commercial enterprise. Whilst training in particular spheres of work may be difficult, the Commission may be able to facilitate arrangements whereby Africans may participate in existing training schemes for business executives. In this connexion it may be that the managerial process both in government and private enterprise can be improved considerably and rapidly. Such improvement could be of particular use in the speeding up of economic development in the region. It should be possible for the experience of the United Nations in training for management and the transferring of knowledge from one country to another to find direct application in Africa.

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(c) Information, research and statistical services

19. It is believed that the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on common economic problems would be of considerable interest and assistance to member Governments. The provision of such services could take many forms. Firstly, in the normal course of its periodic reporting, the secretariat will assemble, analyse and publish reports on economic and related social development in Africa. Certain country studies have been started and material has been assembled by the secretariat at headquarters. This would be expanded by the staff of the Commission and by means of reports of experts in various fields resulting from their work in African countries and territories. The assembling and analysis of data would also be of assistance to the Economic and Social Council in its wider deliberations. Secondly, having regard to the interdependence of African primary producing countries and industrialized countries and to the fact that few African countries have at present the means of setting up elaborate economic intelligence services, it will doubtless be a very important function of the Commission to provide for such needs by preparing periodically summaries of current world economic trends as they affect Africa. Such summaries would comprise notes on the competitive position of African exports in world markets, prospects for the supply of capital and consumer goods by foreign countries to Africa, investment possibilities in Africa by foreign countries, etc. Finally, the provision of information to member Governments on research being currently undertaken in universities and other institutions both inside and outside Africa may be considered useful in directing attention to all work being carried out on specific subjects under consideration by the Commission on the one hand and preventing undesirable duplication of effort on the other.

20. At least as important as the collection and dissemination of data is the analysis to which the data are subjected. Such analysis may be of considerable assistance in formulating decisions by member Governments on specific problems; it may also give rise to reports on specific aspects of development or provide data for seminars or working groups on particular problems. Basic research of this kind may also be useful in determining, for example, the best means of developing existing resources, in considering the economic prerequisites of self-sustaining

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growth, problems of population distribution and growth in relation to the development of resources, conditions and methods of industrialization, etc. Other aspects of work under this heading would include research into social conditions having a direct bearing on economic development.

21. The most important item in the collection and dissemination of information concerns economic and social statistics. It would seem very desirable that all countries and territories of Africa should participate in a programme of statistical development designed to bring them to a stage where economic and social problems and programmes can be handled with fuller knowledge of the basic quantities involved. In view of the difference among the countries and territories in stage of development, in the amount of information already available, and in the nature of the problems and priorities, progress might best be made by attempting to discern for each of them the respects in which they fall short of a basic array of economic and social statistics. An outline of such basic statistical needs is attached as an Annex.

#### AREAS OF WORK

22. The principal methods by which the Commission might carry out its functions have been set out above. It may now be useful to suggest some of the main areas of work and problems which the Commission may feel it desirable to take up. It is emphasized that the areas of work shown are intended to be merely illustrative of the type of problem which the Commission might consider and that no priority is intended in the order in which the projects occur. It should be noted that under Economic and Social Council resolution 402 B (XIII) certain procedures are required by the Council in connexion with the establishment of priorities in the work programmes of its Commissions. Under these procedures the following three groups of projects should be distinguished in preparing the Commission's work programmes:

(a) continuing projects of high priority; (b) ad hoc projects, also of high priority; and (c) projects of lower priority, which may be undertaken only in so far as resources permit. Under this resolution, the Executive Secretary, acting on behalf of the Secretary-General, has discretion as to the scheduling of work, in order that the best use may be made of the staff and resources and to take account of unforeseen circumstances which may arise. Without prejudice to the modest initial draft programme for 1959 which will be submitted to the current session,

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the Executive Secretary proposes, if the Commission agrees, to submit to it at its second session a more systematic and comprehensive list of projects with an indication of the priorities as required by the Economic and Social Council. In formulating such a work programme capable of being executed with the means at the Commission's disposal, the Executive Secretary will bear in mind the preferences of members, both in including projects and in assigning priorities. The Commission itself, in considering individual projects or the programme as a whole will wish to observe the principle endorsed by the Council at its twenty-fourth session that optimum results within the limits of available resources can best be assured by concentration of efforts on a limited number of major areas of activity and by giving preference to those projects which promise practical results.

23. A large number of the general fields of work outlined in the succeeding paragraphs will require the participation not only of the Commission secretariat and Headquarters personnel but also of the secretariats of the various specialized agencies. Co-operation with the agencies should be made easier by the fact that some of them have, or will soon have, regional offices in Africa. Others, in particular UNESCO, IMF and IBRD have indicated their desire for close co-operation in certain fields with which they are concerned. UNESCO, for example, would wish to co-operate in regard to urbanization as would also the IMF in the field of balance of payments and banking statistics. It will be important for the staff of ECA to have frequent contact with offices of the specialized agencies and to have at their disposal a good reference service containing their studies and reports, including technical assistance reports on individual countries. It will also be important for liaison to be established and co-operation maintained with other regional commissions, experience in which may be of interest and assistance to ECA. Finally, account will need to be taken of the work of other organizations working in the economic field in Africa and liaison should be maintained with them.

24. The principal areas of work of the Commission may most conveniently be set out under appropriate economic headings such as production, trade, investment and finance, etc.

(a) Production

25. (i) In view of the predominance of agriculture in most of the African economies, the Commission will wish to consider methods by which the possibilities of expansion and diversification of agricultural production may be encouraged and planned. It is, however, essential that such expansion and diversification be considered within the wider framework of over-all economic development. The requirements of agricultural development schemes in terms of finance, labour and materials will need to be carefully weighed against competing claims arising in other development projects if national economies are to expand at the optimum rate. Such considerations call for close co-operation between the secretariat, the specialized agencies and other competent organizations. In this important field of agricultural development the secretariat proposes to rely upon the FAO for that part of the work falling within the competence of that agency.
- (ii) Whilst production has been diversified in several territories, it is still narrowly based in most. A study of methods of diversification which have proved successful and the feasibility of extending these methods to other countries may be useful. Such a review would comprise a study of means of stimulating alternative production and an analysis of the prerequisites of industrialization, including appraisal of material, human, technical and financial resources and the necessary prerequisites for the establishment of markets. In order that the Governments may be advised on problems of industrial development, whether within the framework of general planning or on an ad hoc basis, it will be desirable to draw on the full resources of the United Nations for studies of problems of industrial development in Africa. These studies might include questions of types of industries suitable to local conditions, size of plants for various industries and similar economic considerations, including types of industries for which special governmental measures may be desirable. In connexion with these studies a review of new sources of energy and of recent technological discoveries would have an important place as would also schemes of

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training for industrial management. Social aspects of diversification, particularly where industrialization is concerned, should be borne in mind. The importance of industrial development corporations and incentives to private enterprise to set up industries in Africa might be considered as well as the role of joint ventures by government and private industry and forms of association of domestic and foreign capital. In addition to raising problems of economic analysis, this also calls for legislation. In connexion with the appraisal of resources there is need for a thorough study of the available resources of the continent, both on a national and international basis. Studies of river basin development where such studies have not been completed and other integrated surveys take a considerable amount of time to prepare, but may well figure among the objectives of ECA.

- (iii) A further important field of study falling under the broad heading of production concerns marketing. In connexion with exports, many marketing boards of differing composition and aims have been set up. An assessment of their contribution to increased volume of exports, to enhanced quality and, where relevant, to their success in stabilizing incomes without acting unduly as a deterrent to production, might be useful in determining the expansion of this method of marketing.

(b) Trade, investment and finance

26. (i) Intra-regional trade in Africa has never been fully analysed nor its potentialities assessed. The field of intra-regional trade in other Economic Commissions has been of considerable significance and analysis of the major flows of trade within Africa, and their commodity content, may be of considerable interest to member Governments.
- (ii) In view of the interdependence of primary producing countries and industrialized countries, the Commission may consider it desirable to have an analysis of African commodity trade and of the competitive position of the different countries of Africa in world markets. It may also be of particular interest to member Governments to have a periodic appraisal of economic conditions in industrialized countries from which their imports of manufactures may be drawn.
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- (iii) Sources of investment funds - (a) Local: Experience in ECLA and ECAFE combined with studies of local possibilities for saving and investment may lead to the establishment of appropriate institutions for mobilizing domestic savings and channelling them to agriculture, industry, etc. Among such institutions special attention might be given to such schemes as the development of markets for government securities, postal savings banks and credit co-operatives and to the organization of development banks and farm loan agencies. The financing of development from marketing board levies and from similar semi-official institutions is important and studies of the methods employed and an assessment of their success may be useful. (b) Foreign: So far as investment funds from abroad are concerned a study of the nature of the existing links between Africa and foreign capital markets may be desirable. With so many African countries seeking investment funds and so many alternative uses offering to these funds a study of incentives to investment might be of particular interest to member Governments. It may be especially important to study new avenues for foreign financing and bring them to the attention of African governments.
- (iv) With the rapid expansion of education, public health and other social services expenditure of both central and local governments has increased enormously. New administrative structures have been created but systems of taxation are outmoded. In Africa fiscal analysis is required to determine which tax structures may be most suitable for the expanding economies of the region. Research directed towards such ends may be considered by the Commission to be of primary concern to member Governments.
- (v) An important question is the development of policy information on the public sector for the effective use of the government budget as an instrument of economic programming. A Manual for Economic and Functional Classification of Government Transactions<sup>3/</sup> has been prepared by the United Nations Secretariat as a guide to the establishment of budget presentations for this purpose, which would supplement but not replace

existing budget systems. In the ECLA and ECAFE regions Budget Workshop meetings of senior Treasury officials have been held to study the adaptation of the policy schemes contained in the Manual to the conditions of the areas. The Commission may wish to consider the desirability of holding a similar workshop for the African region.

(c) Development programming

27. The field of economic development programming is of undoubted interest to African countries and territories. By development programming the efficiency of investment can be increased. Known techniques exist which, when properly adjusted to local circumstances, can be of considerable help in taking advantage of inter-sectoral relationships, of relative factor proportions and of special opportunities, so as to make better use of available scarce resources. Development programming is not by any means limited to the computation of cost and benefits of projects, although this is an essential part of it. Development programming also involves a development of consistent policies in relation to matters affecting economic growth, and the intermeshing of such policies with the actual direction and nature of resources available for capital formation.

28. Thus conceived, development programming is not reduced in importance by the fact that many African countries still lack a good deal of the essential economic and statistical information required; that they still lack many of the institutions necessary for a direction of resources in accordance with a conscious development programme; and that indeed they have not all completely yet attained the character of internally integrated market economies. Experience has shown that the collection of the necessary information, the creation of the necessary institutions and the development of the necessary policies may need the impetus of development programming in order to be realized and to have proper priorities assigned. Development programming involves not only the economic criteria of increasing productivity and increased capital formation, but also the achievement of particular objectives in the distribution of population between town and country, in income distribution, employment policies, etc. Consequently due consideration should be given to the social implications of economic development.

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29. It would be desirable in this field to develop a system of advisory services to Governments to arrange for meetings of experts and officials charged with the execution of programmes, under the auspices of the Commission; to have training courses and seminars in which techniques of development planning and their application to the problems of individual African countries can be discussed. No detailed proposals are made here since it is desired to ascertain the specific wishes of Governments in this field. The Economic Commission for Africa would seem to be the most suitable institution to assist in formulating techniques of development programming particularly adapted to African conditions, drawing for this purpose on the experience of other regions.

(d) Commercial and financial legislation

30. (i) Commercial legislation in many African countries is often inadequate for modern needs. The Commission may consider the establishment of comprehensive legislation adjusted to the needs of an expanding economy of considerable practical importance. In some countries a commercial code may be called for, in others it may suffice to modernize existing laws and to fill remaining gaps. The Commission can assist in developing a conceptual and structural framework for such legislation, as well as in drafting its provisions through the use of comparative research and studies of specific national problems. A pragmatic approach would combine the adaptation of known institutions and techniques with the development of new rules to fit specific needs.

Among the major subjects covered by commercial legislation are the definition of commercial contracts and relationships (e.g. sales, loans and securities, agency) the types and uses of commercial paper, the establishment and operations of various forms of business enterprises, especially corporations, bankruptcy and insolvency. In addition, government regulations may need to be set up or revised in such fields as insurance (forms of contracts and operations of companies), banking, issuance and trading of securities, rate-fixing of privately operated public utilities, judicial and arbitral settlement of disputes, etc.

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In the investment field there may be need for review of the rules and regulations affecting foreign as well as domestic investments, including tax incentives, exchange regulations, labour legislation, industrial regulation, etc.

(e) Social aspects of economic development

(i) Community development

The Commission may wish to consider the contribution of community development in economic growth in Africa. Other subjects of importance would be the development of rural industries within community development programmes, administrative problems relating to community development, the stimulation of self-help housing through community development and the consolidation of scattered land holdings and the proper utilization of land as part of community development work. These subjects would lend themselves to discussions by working parties of government officials which the Commission may wish to convene during the next few years. In community development co-operation with UNICEF may prove particularly useful.

Among practical field projects study tours may be organized for participants who might profit from a study of community development schemes inside or outside the African continent.

(ii) Urban development

The rapid increase in urban populations which has taken place in recent years has already caused important economic and social problems. The total urban population is still quite small but it promises to grow with extraordinary rapidity in the next few decades, particularly if there is a notable advance in economic development. Urbanization, as part of the larger process of economic and social change, has wide implications for industrial development, location of industry, commerce, transportation, etc. It may prove important in African countries to prevent the over-concentration of rural migrants in "primate" cities;

such cities, while offering a plentiful labour supply and thereby attracting certain industries, can incur such expensive social overheads and involve such distances from the supplies of raw materials, as to affect economic development adversely. In Africa, as in other under-developed areas, urbanization has generally been taking place more rapidly than industrialization, and the achievement of an appropriate adjustment between these two processes will necessarily be an important goal in the economic development of the African countries and territories.

In order to minimize the disruptive effects of urbanization in the future it will be necessary to take appropriate steps to bring it under more effective control. This should be conceived within the framework of over-all economic and social policies and development. Thus, the Commission may wish to study the applicability of community development techniques to urban areas in Africa and the relationship of physical planning in urban areas to industrial development and the location of industries. Other subjects of special interest to the Commission would be measures aimed at controlling urbanization through more effective application of techniques of town and regional planning, the creation of social services to deal with problems of newly arrived migrants and their families, as well as the provision of adequate health, educational and welfare facilities.

(iii) Housing, planning and building

In this field, the Commission may wish to concentrate in the first instance on low-cost housing, the development of building industries and the utilization of modern concepts in town and regional planning. Studies on this subject would be helpful to Governments in the development of policies and programmes. Other more specific subjects may include the use of co-operative and self-help techniques in schemes for low-cost housing, and the application of modern concepts of physical planning in major projects for resource development and the extension of urban areas. Among regional projects a workshop on low-cost housing, as well as the creation of an African regional centre for low-cost housing along the lines of the centres already established in Latin America and Southeast Asia, might be considered.

(f) Transport and tourism

32. (i) Transport

In Africa, where the main areas of production are often far from the ports and where agricultural and mineral resources are not fully exploited because of the absence of facilities for their extraction, the improvement of transportation is one of the major needs of a large number of countries. In this connexion the Commission may find it useful to have an assessment of the importance of the different types of transport available, their financing and maintenance. In view of the general lack of intra-regional road and rail links, particularly in tropical Africa, it may be of assistance to consider the financial and other aspects of important existing communication links such as the Mozambique-Rhodesia rail link. The creation of such links is important to facilitate the spread of development, the interchange of goods and ideas and the growth of markets. The Secretariat at Headquarters has had under consideration for some time the possibility of a seminar in Africa on transportation in relation to development and it may prove desirable and feasible to convene such a seminar under the Commission's auspices in 1959 or 1960. Among the studies currently in progress is a paper on transport problems in West Africa and the Sudan which could be ready for discussion next year.

(ii) Tourism

Certain African countries and territories have already developed a limited range of attractions for tourists. At the same time the large expansion in air-line service has brought Africa more within travelling distance for many tourists. Conscious of the possibilities of developing this tourist trade several African countries have participated in international conferences in this connexion. In view of the possible contribution to the balance of payments which might arise from any expansion in the volume of tourist traffic, the Commission may consider it desirable for a preliminary study of means of encouraging such traffic to be undertaken.

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33. The areas of work have been set out above in concise terms. The Executive Secretary has, however, already carried out certain additional preliminary work in the economic, social and statistical fields. As an example of the development of which the above work programme is capable the Annex, which sets out in some detail the Executive Secretary's thoughts on a statistical survey, is attached.