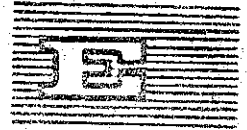


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CENTRAL SERVICES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES
IN SOME FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Document drawn up by a consultant of the
United Nations

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Preface

1. The time allotted for the drafting of the present study has not been sufficient to permit assembling of information on countries other than Cameroun, the Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger and Togo.

2. With the exception of Niger, this information has been gathered from the official services of the countries concerned and on the basis of a questionnaire completed in the Ivory Coast, Togo and Upper Volta. The information concerning Cameroun was supplied by the Head of the Department responsible for the communes for Northern Cameroun.

I. GENERAL REMARKS CONCERNING REGIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANIZATION
IN THE COUNTRIES STUDIED

A. Organization in General

Cameroun

3. Eastern Cameroun is divided into départements which are further divided into arrondissements. These purely administrative units are controlled respectively by prefects (préfets) and sub-prefects (sous-préfets).

4. In addition, at the base, rural and urban communes exist which are local authorities (collectivités) having both a juridical personality and financial autonomy.

5. The division of Eastern Cameroun into two administrative regions must also be noted: Northern and Southern Cameroun. In this study we will be dealing chiefly with Northern Cameroun.

6. The communes of Northern Cameroun, created in 1962, have been actually established in the course of the fiscal period 1962-1963.

7. Urban communes can have either full or medium powers (plein ou moyen exercice) whereas rural communes all have medium powers. Thus we find the terminology introduced by the French law 55-1489 of 18 November 1955 setting out "the municipal reorganization in West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Togo, Cameroun and Madagascar", and adapting the French municipal law of 5 April 1884 to existing local conditions.

8. In communes having full powers, the council and mayor are elected. With regard to communes having medium powers, a distinction is made on the basis of their being rural or urban. The urban communes have an entirely elected council whereas, in the rural communes, only a proportion of the councillors is elected; the other part is nominated by the central authority of the State of Eastern Cameroun. In both cases the mayor is appointed.

Ivory Coast

9. In the Ivory Coast the division of the country is made, in the same manner, into départements and arrondissements which are administered either by prefects or sub-prefects nominated by the President of the Republic.

10. Legally, the départements have a juridical personality, financial autonomy and unrestricted powers of administration. In practice, however, for the present the départements, instituted by a 1961 law, have no resources and no budget. Thus the existence of the "General Council" provided for by the above-mentioned law is still theoretical and the prefect remains essentially the representative of central government.

11. The arrondissement is strictly an administrative entity wherein the sub-prefect, under the supervision of the prefect, is the representative of central government. Thus he administers the arrondissement directly, which includes, among other units, traditional entities such as cantons and villages which do not have any juridical existence of their own.

12. Moreover, a few agglomerations of an urban nature have been established as communes set up by the French legislation already mentioned in paragraph 7. Three communes (Abidjan, Bouaké and Grand-Bassam) have full powers and six have medium powers (three chief-towns of départements and three chief-towns of arrondissements).

13. The town councils are entirely elected in both cases. The mayor is elected or appointed depending on the status of the commune - whether it has full or medium powers.

Upper Volta

14. Upper Volta, by a law of 2 February 1960, has established "rural communities" (collectivites rurales) at the level of administrative districts (circonscriptions), and also sub-divisions of districts, that is to say, administrative posts, cantons or groups of villages". The same law specifies that communes having full or medium powers which already exist or which will be created within the administrative districts shall enjoy an independent existence.
15. It would seem that the commune must be essentially urban in its make-up in contrast to the rural community (collectivite rurale) which, although the law does not say so explicitly, may be found at two different levels.
16. The law foresees two kinds of rural authorities (collectivites rurales):
- (a) Authorities having full powers whose president is selected from within the council;
 - (b) Authorities having medium powers whose presidency is taken by the head of the administrative district or by the head of the administrative post if the rural authorities should fall within the jurisdiction of the administrative post. Moreover, "in the event of a rural authority with medium powers being made up of cantons or groups of villages, the president is designated by decree of the council of ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of the Interior".
17. At the present time only rural authorities having medium powers exist: there are 59 of them.

Niger

18. The present organization in the Republic of Niger is controlled by Law No. 61.50 of December 1961. This law has set up the basic administrative districts (unitary areas or

sub-divisions) as local authorities having a juridical personality and with their own budget. These organizations are called circonscriptions.

19. At the lowest level the traditional organization is found (cantons or groupings, villages or tribes) whose authorities play a certain role in the administration of the country.

20. Finally, three urban agglomerations have been established as communes in which the same municipal legislation is applied as that in the three preceding countries. Niamey is a commune having full powers whereas Zindar and Maradi are communes having medium powers.

Togo

21. Togo is divided into seventeen administrative districts having a juridical personality and financial autonomy. In addition, there are seven communes, having either full or medium powers, which exist as a result of the municipal legislation of 1955.

22. Local authorities at the level of administrative districts were established by a law of May 1959.

B. Evaluation

23. With the exception of communes instituted at the level of certain urban agglomerations, the decentralized authorities have only recently been created in the five countries studied. Taken as a whole, their financial autonomy is relatively limited and the independent powers of administration which they enjoy are somewhat severely limited by the legal texts or sometimes by particular circumstances such as those which affect the départements of the Ivory Coast.

24. In these conditions, it is obvious that they can make only a small contribution to national development and, moreover, they do not constitute, at the present time, dynamic and really effective units permitting an active participation of the population at all levels.

25. Northern Cameroun seems to be an exception to the rule. There, the creation of rural and urban communes was carried out in the spirit and

following the pattern of those which, since 1952, have been functioning in a satisfactory manner in the entire administrative region of Southern Cameroun.

26. In Niger a reform of the regional and local organization is under study. This would tend to the creation of structures at three levels:

- (a) At the base: communes (in rural as well as urban areas)
- (b) At the intermediate (relai) level: arrondissements (at the level of the present districts.
- (c) At the regional level: départements.

27. Communes and arrondissements will be the local authorities having a juridical personality, a wide financial autonomy and real powers of independent administration.

28. Three pre-requisites govern the reforms: the maintenance of public order, the strengthening of national unity and the optimum development of the country. To this end, emphasis has been placed on the following: the participation of the population, co-ordination and decentralization.

29. In this spirit, the decentralized authorities will no longer be simple units with responsibility for executing locally certain duties which the central government does not wish to or cannot carry out itself. On the contrary, they will be the fundamental elements ensuring the participation of the population and by this fact will enhance the value of the services which they will provide to the inhabitants, apart from the effective contribution which they will certainly make to national and local development.

II. THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE (DECENTRALIZED) LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A. Description

30. In the five countries studied, the central department with particular responsibilities for local authorities falls under the Ministry of the Interior.

Cameroun

31. In Northern Cameroun there is a department for the communes of the northern administrative region which is placed under the direct authority of the Secretary of State for the Interior. The decree which organizes this department allocates a certain number of functions to it, which it exercises directly. On the contrary "the study of measures of a legislative and regulatory character designed to facilitate the development of the extension of the municipal system in the northern administrative region" is carried out "in liaison with the directorate of communal affairs". This directorate is principally occupied with the communes of the administrative region of Southern Cameroun. It is also placed under the authority of the Secretary of State for the Interior.

32. Generally speaking, excepting the studies of a legislative and regulatory character which we have discussed above, the department of communes of the Northern administrative region "assures the preparation and execution of the acts passed by virtue of the supervisory powers over the communes which the Secretary of State of the Interior has". The department includes administrative and financial sections the respective duties of which are defined below by the text of the decree organizing them.

"The functions of the administrative section are, chiefly:

- Verification prior to the approval of the Secretary of State of the regulatory acts of the mayors and municipal councils;
- Investigation of requests for subsidies and loans from the local bodies;
- Supervision of markets by the communes and unions of communes;
- Nomination of mayors of communes having medium powers, as well as chairmen (presidents) of unions of communes;
- Relations with local supervisory organs;
- Inspection of matters related to personnel administration of the communes;

- Creation of new communes, unions of communes and communal organs;
- Preparation of statistics and documentation;
- Practical organization of municipal elections;
- In addition, the administrative section assures the internal functioning of the department and notably the book-keeping and accounts and control of daily paid workers and of plant and equipment".

"The financial section has responsibility for:

- The verification, final checking and eventually any adjustments needed in the budgets and administrative accounts of the communes and unions of communes which are supervised directly by the Secretary of State;
- Inspection of the supervisory powers delegated to the prefects by the Secretary of State for the Interior over the budgets and administrative accounts of certain communes or unions of communes".

33. Finally, the decree gives authority to the Head of the Department, which he can delegate to his deputy, "to undertake information missions and to extend administrative assistance to mayors and town clerks, as well as to civil servants responsible for supervision on the departmental level. In the same circumstances they may undertake "missions of inspection and verification as well as administrative enquiries of a disciplinary character concerning the duties performed by those responsible for communal administration". The powers of verification and inspection apply equally to unions of communes.

34. It may be noted that emphasis is placed, above all, on the control and supervision aspects of this responsibility, even though, however, it is a question of "gathering information and extending administrative assistance".

35. It may be noted, also, that at the level of the departmental authorities, there is a certain deconcentration of these supervisory functions. Finally, it is fitting to stress the unity of the supervisory

function which the Secretary of State for the Interior alone exercises, as much in the financial as in the administrative field. However, in practice, the Minister of Finance does intervene to countersign the budget and the administrative accounts.

Ivory Coast

36. In the Ivory Coast a service of departmental and communal affairs is attached to the Directorate of General Administration of the Ministry of the Interior. In addition, the law "concerning the functioning of départements gives to the prefect "administrative control of the local authorities except as concerns the approval of communal budgets which remains within the competence of the Minister of the Interior".

37. In fact, this organization is completely theoretical. On the one hand the supervisory duties of the prefect have not yet become a reality and, on the other hand, the existence of the service of departmental and communal affairs is for the moment nothing but a name. In reality, the administration of the nine communes of the Ivory Coast is directly supervised by an Inspector of Administrative Affairs. As for the départements, we have already seen that they do not yet function as decentralized units.

38. The result is that the duties of the service of departmental and communal affairs are not further defined and the supervision (*tutelle*) of the communes amounts essentially to inspection and supervisory activities.

39. In principle, the Minister of the Interior acts alone. However, the Minister of Finance takes advantage of the fact that communal loans must be guaranteed by the State to demand the right to countersign and inspect the budgets. As in Northern Cameroun, it is a question of a de facto situation not ratified by any text.

Upper Volta

40. In Upper Volta, the Directorate of the Interior, in the Ministry of the same name, includes an Office of the communes and rural organizations. It is responsible for "seeing to all questions

relating to legislation and to supervision of the communes and local authorities" (decree of the Minister of the Interior of 18 May 1960). In practice, by application of the law establishing the rural local authorities, the Minister of the Interior exercises only "administrative supervision over the councils of the authorities". As for the budget and the accounts, it is the Council of Ministers which approves them as well as intervening, as a supervisory authority, in a certain number of other financial matters. In addition, the decree determining the financial and accounting system of the rural local authorities gives direct supervisory powers to the Minister of Finance, who, in certain cases, acts jointly with the Minister of the Interior. Finally, a concurring opinion from other Ministers is sometimes required. For example, estimates for various works which exceed one million francs are approved by the Minister of the Interior "after consultation and with the agreement of the Minister for Public Works and eventually with other Ministers who might be interested". When the total for works is above five million francs, the necessary authority is given by the Council of Ministers.

Niger

41. The present organization in the Republic of Niger is no less complex than that of Upper Volta.

42. With regard to districts (circonscriptions), supervision is exercised in various ways:

- By the Minister of the Interior acting alone;
- By the common intervention of the Ministers of the Interior and for Finance, the former acting only after obtaining the agreement of the latter;
- By the Minister for Finance acting alone.

43. There are still a certain number of supervisory duties which depend directly on:

- One financial authority or another;

- The Administrative Chamber or the Accounting Chamber of the Supreme Court;
- The National Assembly;
- The President of the Republic acting by decree made in the Council of Ministers;
- Finally, the head of the district intervening as a representative of the Executive.

44. As for the supervision of the communes, it is regulated by different texts which keep these organizations within a tight and narrow framework which is as complicated as the one affecting the districts.

45. In both cases, the Minister of the Interior exercises, in fact, ~~only political and administrative~~ supervision. However, no legal text governs the functioning of the services which are specially concerned with them. The two offices existing for this purpose—the Office of Supervision for the circonscriptions and the Office of Supervision for the communes for the moment confine themselves, in the most simple terms, to strict activities of supervision and inspection.

Togo

46. In Togo the Minister of the Interior alone is responsible for the local authorities except in budgetary matters. The budgets are, in effect, approved either by interministerial decree made jointly by the Ministers for Finance and of the Interior when sums of less than ten million francs are involved, or by decree made by the Council of Ministers when the sum involved is ten million francs or more.

47. It is the Directorate of the Interior which is particularly responsible for "paying attention to the observance of legality by persons in public office and to the manner in which the budget of the local authorities is carried into effect".

B. Evaluation

48. It will be noted that, in a general way, the central department particularly responsible for the local authorities limits its action to the political and administrative aspects of the relations between these authorities and the State and acts, above and before all, as an organ charged with supervision and inspection. This can be explained by the very conception of decentralization which has prevailed until now in the countries in question.

49. It is only in Cameroun that a legal basis may be found which is different. This provides for "gathering in formation and extending administrative assistance", to be exercised by those responsible in the department of communes.

50. Other evidence points to the separation of the supervisory powers, principally in Upper Volta and in Niger.

51. Experience shows that such a separation does not encourage unity of action in regard to the decentralized authorities. Indeed, it is often a source of friction and misunderstanding between the different departments concerned. Finally, it causes inevitable delays and makes, undoubtedly, for bottlenecks which are directly prejudicial to the interests of the authorities concerned.

52. In Niger, within the context of the new regional and local administrative reforms, the bill governing local authorities contains a chapter expressly dedicated to control and supervision. What is important to emphasize is the spirit in which State intervention is regarded. The article of the bill defining control and supervision stipulates, in effect, that it should embrace the following functions:

(a) Assistance and advice to the communes and arroundissements, support and co-ordination of their activities with those of the State;

(b) Inspection.

53. Thus control and supervision will be exercised within the general meaning of the reforms, the decentralized authorities being regarded as having an important role to play in national and local development within the framework of the closest possible co-operation with the services of the State. Priority is given to assistance to the local units and to the co-ordination of their action with that of the State. The idea of assistance is taken up again in the articles of the bill which enumerate the duties of the prefect and the sub-prefect. These functionaries, at their own echelons, are in charge of "guiding and assisting the authorities of the territorial units in their activities". Finally, mayors and sub-prefects have been given the task "of harmonizing the activities of the State and those of the communes or arrondissements for which they are responsible.

54. From the standpoint of organizing control and supervision it is provided that the President of the Republic (the legal supervisory authority, given the constitutional regime of the presidential type) will delegate his functions to one and the same authority at the top, viz. the Minister of the Interior. The latter will be able to delegate in turn the functions which he so determines to the representatives of the Executive at the département and arrondissement levels. The setting up of a single supervisory service, conceived in this way, will allow the putting into practice of an effective policy of assistance to the local authorities and, at the same time, will encourage constructive co-operation between these units and the State, in the properly understood interest of the population. The latter, moreover, will have the opportunity of participating extensively and effectively in government action.

55. The existence of a single department in charge of supervision and control in all fields does not exclude interventions from other ministries. Thus, in financial matters, the Ministry of Finance will have an uncontested role to play, especially as regards eventual aid to local authorities by the State, in addition to giving advice in the matter of financial procedures. However, its interventions, like those of other technical ministries, will be co-ordinated in the action taken by the

Minister responsible for control and supervision it will be initiated by him and carried out with an eye to assistance, support and co-operation.

III. OTHER CENTRAL SERVICES PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE DECENTRALIZED UNITS (COLLECTIVITES)

A. Interventions in the financial field

56. We have already seen briefly in what manner the Minister of Finance intervenes in questions of financial aid to the local authorities in the five countries studied but also, most important, in present-day conditions, in questions of control and supervision. On the other hand, in the documentation which has permitted this study to be drafted, we have not found forms of assistance and co-operation like the following:

- Advice on questions of budgetary, accounting and fiscal procedures;
- Collaboration in the drafting of manuals aimed at facilitating the work of the local authorities;
- Research into and putting into effect of measures designed to strengthen the financial autonomy of the local bodies.

B. Assistance in the field of personnel

57. In Northern Cameroun the Ministry responsible for the Civil Service (Fonction Publique) receives for clearance the contracts between the communes and higher level staff. The secondment of central government personnel to the decentralized authorities is expressly permitted and practised, but there is no central agency providing training to local government personnel.

58. In the Ivory Coast the Civil Service Ministry only deals with the temporary assignment of central personnel to local authorities within the framework of the General Statute of the Civil Service. The Inspector of Administrative Affairs, mentioned earlier, sees to it that the rules are observed in the recruitment of personnel by local authorities.

59. The six communes with medium powers (moyen exercice) having at their head a prefect or sub-prefect are staffed, in practice, by the personnel put at the disposal of those authorities. A certain confusion of functions immediately arises between the government and the commune. This confirms what was said concerning the character of the local authorities and their strict dependency on the central government.

60. Training of local government personnel is not organized in any way. In the commune of Abidjan the Director of Administrative Affairs supports a training programme for his staff. Under his guidance 7 employees (out of the 1200 presently employed) are taking a correspondence course given by the National School of Municipal Administration in Paris.

61. In Upper Volta the secondment of central personnel to local authorities is envisaged by the law. As far as training is concerned, nothing exists in the country. Two civil servants, who will eventually work at the local level, are receiving advanced training in France.

62. In Niger the situation is very much the same as in the Ivory Coast. Except for manual workers who are hired under the Labour Law, the districts have practically no staff of their own. Their main functions are carried out by State personnel who are not even placed on secondment. In addition, the tax collector (receveur) is by definition the special agent of the State, who is therefore under the direct technical supervision of the Treasury. However, secondment of staff is envisaged by the statute of the Civil Service.

63. The National School of Administration does not offer special training for local government personnel.

64. The reform of the regional and local administration includes plans for training of local government personnel before the changes are introduced and for systematic in-service training afterwards.

65. The new legislation expressly states that the local authorities shall have their own personnel to be engaged either under the statute or under the Labour Law. A decree will have to define the statute mentioned here. When this is done, it will be possible to envisage for

certain types of personnel a unified system, especially as concerns employment, dismissal and possibly pensions. The bill also includes provision for secondment of State personnel, but only at the request of the local authority. The latter will be authorized to request that the functions of tax collector be carried out by a State Accounting Officer. In this case, however, such functions will be kept separate from the collection of State taxes.

66. In Togo the situation with regard to personnel is comparable with that in Cameroun.

C. Central Assistance in the field of socio-economics

67. The five countries studied have a central department in charge of planning, attached either directly to the Presidency of the Republic (in Cameroun and Niger) or to some other ministry (Finance in Togo, National Economy in Upper-Volta, Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning in the Ivory Coast).

68. Until now the department of planning has not concerned itself, in one way or another, with the co-ordination of the capital investment programmes of the decentralized bodies, except in Niger where certain capital investment plans have been integrated into the national development plan.

69. In Niger also, it is intended, in the terms of the reforms, to interest the local authorities directly in planning, as much from the point of view of its formulation as in its execution. This being so the Planning Commission can intervene to assist the local authorities with a view to realizing their own development programmes. The bill treating the reform of the local authorities stipulates, moreover, that specific subsidies may be allotted for this purpose. It is certain that in the allocation of these subsidies, which will contribute directly to capital formation, the co-ordinating action of the plan will be the determining factor. It will have its rôle to play in the field of close co-operation established between the State and the decentralized units in order to assure the development of the country in the most rational manner possible.

70. Investments are related to the possibilities of obtaining loans. In this respect the existence of a central agency for making loans to local authorities will tend greatly to encourage such investments.
71. Such an organization has been specially created in the Republic of Niger through State intervention. In the other countries, loans may sometimes be obtained by the local authorities: in Cameroun and Upper Volta from the Development Bank, in the Ivory Coast and Togo from the Central Bank for Economic Co-operation (a French organization) or again, in the case of the Ivory Coast, from the Credit Bank of that country. These loans must be guaranteed by the State.
72. A central agency of community development, or else a central body in charge of social problems in general, may be able to back up strongly the carrying out of an effective programme of decentralization. This support makes itself felt in the preparation and transformation of the mental outlook of officials and non-officials as well as by instituting ways and means of seeking out, developing, guiding and stimulating the initiative of the people and their participation in government action.
73. In Eastern Cameroun, the establishment of such an organization is under study.
74. The Ivory Coast, on the other hand, does not possess such a body.
75. In Upper Volta the Agency for Rural Development (Animation), attached to the Department responsible for Rural Affairs has not until now played an active role as regards the working of the decentralized authorities.
76. It is the same with the Department of Mass Education which functions in Togo, whose agents confine themselves at present to the giving of advice on hygiene to the rural population and combating illiteracy by organizing lectures and evening courses.
77. In Niger the General Commissariat for Human Development, recently established, is an attempt at an original solution the orientation and functions of which are such that it will most certainly contribute to

the implementation of a policy of decentralization for national and local development.

D. Assistance concerning legal problems and organization in general

78. None of the five countries studied has a special department for providing legal advice to the local authorities, a department which would be responsible for example, for:

- The interpretation of texts applied by the local authorities;
- The examination of the legality of measures which the local authorities propose taking;
- The drafting of model by-laws.
- Advice to the local authorities in the judicial field in general.

79. Certain of these duties are, however, carried out by the department responsible for the local authorities. However, they are discharged more by way of control than with an eye to assistance and support.

80. Except in the Ivory Coast where a central department of organization and methods is being set up, the aims of effective organization and the study of rational working methods are still spasmodic and depend on individual effort.

E. Assistance to local authorities in technical matters

81. In questions of agriculture, stock farming, public works and health, assistance to the territorial units is not at present organized in a systematic manner. In general, the central technical departments and their regional or local agents do not have any idea or have an insufficient one of the determining role which these local authorities might play in the development of the country. When they intervene, it is more for the purpose of demanding the carrying out of instructions given at the top than to establish a dialogue which would be the point of departure for a policy of assistance and co-operation.

F. Other specific institutions capable of giving assistance and support to local authorities

82. In none of the countries studied do there exist specific institutions such as associations of local authorities or groupings of the personnel of these authorities.

83. In Niger the bill already mentioned provides the possibility of the communes and the arrondissements creating, given the consent of the supervisory authority, organs of common interest and thus eventually an association of local authorities. The conditions and the methods of functioning and management must be approved by the supervising authority.

G. Evaluation

84. In addition and outside of the department particularly responsible for the local authorities and the concepts which underlie its activities, a brief glance at the other central services placed at the disposal of these decentralized units permits us to underline the extremely limited scope which they have in the five countries studied. Where they exist, these departments direct, give orders and inspect, much more so than they assist, support and seek co-operation.

85. The major reason for this may be found in the fact that those responsible do not always seem to have had until now a very clear conception of the place of the decentralized authorities in furthering development, nor do they perceive the valuable influence which they can exercise from the point of view of securing the participation of the people -- this participation when active and voluntary-being in itself the first requisite for valid and durable development.

86. Following this train of thought, it is certain that the most urgent measures which seem to be demanded are those of education and public relations.

87. The local authorities and the population must be educated in order to show them the necessity for taking the initiative, for voluntary effort and common action, as well as to bring them to assume their responsibilities fully, both to their local and national communities.

88. It is necessary at the same time to inform all levels of officials of the need for all of them to be sensitive to human problems and to be aware of the essential functions of the decentralized bodies in all national and local development, of the fundamental importance of these units from the point of view of participation of the people, of the democratic values which they represent and of their effectiveness in the strengthening of national unity.

89. It is, however, necessary that these local authorities under consideration fulfil a certain number of conditions lacking which they will not be able, in practice, to play an active and useful role in all fields. The most important of these conditions concerns their real freedom of action. It is essential to grant them a concrete and tangible autonomy, to give them freedom of action, to let them assume responsibility and to decide what actions are to be put into effect in the field in which they are competent.

90. It is evident that the educational and publicity measures of which we have just spoken will bring about gradually a successful evolution in the approach to relations between the central government and its agencies on the one hand and the decentralized authorities on the other. They will be sure to develop entirely different attitudes which will be beneficial to all.

91. It is evident that in this vast undertaking of education and public relations, a central agency of community development, animation or human promotion in general should make an important contribution towards an effective programme of decentralization and should work to this end in close relationship with the central agency having particular responsibility for local authorities, the latter itself showing a constructive and co-operative approach aimed at assisting these authorities in every possible way.
