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Item 6 of the agenda

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate to the members of the Economic Commission for Africa the following communication received from the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND DELEGATION
ADDIS ABABA

31 December 1958

Sir,

I have received from the Secretary-General of the CCTA/CSA the attached memorandum, dated 13 December 1958, which is relevant to the discussion of item 6 of the Agenda of the First session of the Economic Commission for Africa.

I have the honour to request you to circulate copies of this letter and of the attached memorandum to governments and organizations participating in the session of the Commission.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

(Signed) J.D. Profumo, M.P.
Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary
for Foreign Affairs
Head of the Delegation to the
Economic Commission for Africa

M E M O R A N D U MACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION FOR TECHNICAL
COOPERATION IN AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA (CCTA)
OF INTEREST TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)

The present memorandum has been prepared for the information of the ECA Secretariat and of other participants at the first Session of the Commission, who might wish to know more of the activities of CCTA. It in no way constitutes a complete account of these activities, but merely aims at giving some general information on the working methods of CCTA and at providing some indication of the importance attached by the latter to certain of the subjects mentioned in the memorandum of the Executive Secretary of ECA, dated 19th November 1958. Fuller details will be provided, at the request of the ECA Secretariat, or of delegates concerned. The report of the 9th meeting of the Scientific Council for Africa, which has already been sent to the ECA Secretariat, gives a general outline of CCTA projects. The United Nations Secretariat in New York and the Specialized Agencies have also been informed in detail of the activities of CCTA, in their respective fields, close co-ordination having been established with CCTA, and many activities being the subject of joint action.

CCTA was formed in 1950, by six Governments, in order to facilitate close liaison between their technical departments, to pool their experience and possibly to co-ordinate their activities. A Treaty was signed in January 1954, giving the Organization a definite legal status. In 1957, Ghana and Liberia became Members of CCTA. The Member Governments of CCTA control all territories in an area lying to the South of a line following the 20th parallel North and the Western and Southern borders of Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, the only exception being Spanish Guinea. The geographical area covered by CCTA has recently been extended to include all parts of Africa lying South of the 20th parallel.

From the very inception of the Commission, an essential characteristic of CCTA became apparent; its role was that of a co-ordinator or of an instrument placed at the disposal of Governments to facilitate exchanges and co-operation. The Commission has, therefore, no large permanent technical or scientific staff. Its aim is to enable technical departments themselves to co-operate on projects they may wish to undertake jointly, and not to form a substitute for those departments.

Although CCTA has only a limited permanent technical or scientific staff, it does, on the other hand, receive regular guidance from the Scientific Council for Africa (CSA). None of the 16 Members of the Council are Government nominees. They are chosen by the Council itself, from among the most eminent scientists in the various branches of knowledge covered by CCTA. Among them, we find persons in charge of research in several countries of Africa, a number of professors and heads of important technical departments, as well as other outstanding personalities in technical fields concerned with African development.

CSA meets annually, in one or another African town. Each meeting lasts about two weeks. It held its 9th Meeting at Accra in August 1958. It provides CCTA with advice of a general nature and can itself initiate such projects. It convenes every year a number of specialists' meetings (four or five) to study a given scientific or technical subject of general interest for Africa (in 1959, for instance: open forests, catchment problems, the psychology of the African child, virus diseases and rickettsiosis of man and animals).

The Members of CSA are also at the disposal of the Commission and of each Member Government to advise them in their particular fields, on technical and scientific matters.

Within the framework of the programmes drawn up annually by Member Governments, and in the light of proposals presented by CSA, CCTA undertakes the following activities:

(a) It convenes every year about 40 meetings on the most varied subjects. Some of these meetings take the form of full-scale conferences, with about 100 delegates, which may be prepared a year beforehand and cover a comparatively wide field (in 1957, labour, statistics, technical education; in 1958, tropical forests; in 1959, housing and urbanization, conservation and utilization of the soil). Most meetings, which are also of an inter-Governmental character, deal with more closely defined scientific or technical subjects and are attended by only a limited number of participants. Others, again, are convened by C.S.A., and include only experts.

Among these various types of meetings, stress must be laid on discussions of a regional nature (or sub-regional, to use a term commonly employed by the United Nations). It has appeared indeed that many concrete technical problems require to be studied by delegates coming from areas having similar vegetation, or, to be more precise, from the same ecological area. The activities of the Commission in the fields of geology, the conservation and utilization of soils, community development, control of epizootic diseases, medical co-operation, etc., frequently form the subject of meetings of this type.

Reports are issued on the work of the meetings. These take the form of printed publications in the case of the larger meetings.

(b) CCTA aims at facilitating the direct exchange of information between specialists or experts concerned with African problems. In twelve fields, it has established small permanent Bureaus, whose task it is to publish, in English and French, technical information relating to their particular subject: agriculture, pedology, phytosanitary protection, epizootic diseases, certain human diseases, nutrition, labour, social sciences, rural welfare, statistics, housing, geology. The Bureaus are situated in various parts of Africa. The large ones include a specialized staff of two or three, and a small secretariat.

In the fields where no permanent Bureau exists, the Commission established Panels of Correspondents. These Correspondents are authorized by their respective Governments to correspond directly. The Panels may call upon the Secretariat of the Commission, and in particular upon its African Bureau at Bukavu, Belgian Congo, for assistance in their work.

(c) CCTA is sometimes called upon to co-ordinate work undertaken on a given subject by several Governments. Thus, CCTA has enabled cartographic projects to be started, covering the whole of Africa (a Climatological Atlas of Africa is at present being compiled). Joint Surveys are being undertaken (on migrations in West Africa, and on absenteeism and labour turnover in the whole of Africa South of the Sahara). A number of publications have appeared as a result of this work: an Inventory of Economic Studies which have appeared in Africa, will be published in January 1959 and will be regularly kept up-to-date. A Factual Study of National Accounting Systems, with reference to the international system recommended by UN, is at present being prepared by three experts, one British, one French and one American.

(d) CCTA has established a special body to encourage the development of bilateral technical assistance, the Foundation for Mutual Assistance in Africa (FAMA), which it was decided to establish in February 1958, at the Accra meeting, attended by observers from several non-member countries of CCTA, from the United Nations, from TAB and from the specialized agencies. FAMA receives requests for assistance, and seeks the necessary experts, or training facilities suited to African conditions. The provision of assistance, as proposed by FAMA, is then undertaken by means of direct bilateral agreements between the Government or Organization providing the assistance and the receiving Government. FAMA also undertakes the establishment of temporary training centres, which are organized in Africa for the benefit of staff working in that continent. FAMA also provides assistance to member countries of CCTA and other countries lying South of the 20th parallel. Several projects are being implemented in the Republic of the Sudan and others are under consideration for Ethiopia.

In the course of its work, C.C.T.A. has come to form ever-closer links with other International Organizations, and more especially with the Specialized Agencies and with the United Nations. The world-wide experience, the authority and the means at their disposal, enable them to provide CCTA with very valuable assistance in its work. Conversely, the technical bodies associated with the work of CCTA, and the scientists who advise them, have thus been able to participate more fully in the activities arranged by these International Organizations. Five meetings are to be organized jointly by CCTA and FAO in 1959, four by CCTA and WHO, one by CCTA and ILO and one by CCTA and UNESCO. FAO observers attended eight CCTA meetings in 1958, and WHO observers attended four meetings. Many personal contacts took place between CCTA and the other organizations, in the course of discussions on future programmes. CCTA is represented at official meetings which decide on the general and regional programmes of the Specialized Agencies.

The activities of CCTA cover many fields, mainly concerned with natural resources: climatology, geology, hydrology, pedology, all forms of agriculture (phytotechnics, phytopathology, forestry, qualea control, aquatic plants and other pests, phytosanitary protection, mechanization of agriculture, etc., veterinary questions, epizootic diseases, sea and fresh-water fisheries, co-operative societies, the preservation and storage of foodstuffs, etc. These activities also cover other fields in which the Governments considered it desirable to promote an exchange of views and close co-operation: social sciences, labour, certain human diseases, mental health, nutrition, community development, housing, the use of radio-isotopes, and technology (e.g. road construction).

Among the points mentioned in the report of the Executive Secretary of E.C.A., four have been, and still are, the subjects of technical activity on the part of C.C.T.A. These are more limited in scope than the E.C.A. Projects, both from the geographical point of view and from the angle of approach to these problems:

1) Agriculture:

As was mentioned above, agriculture forms one of the most important activities of C.C.T.A. It is impossible in a few words to describe the results already achieved in this field or the projects at present being undertaken, both at Inter-African and at regional level. The Directors of F.A.O are particularly well-informed of what has been accomplished in this respect.

2) Statistics:

C.C.T.A. includes an Inter-African Committee on Statistics, which has met every year for the past five years. It enables those in charge of statistical departments in Africa South of the Sahara to have an opportunity of meeting one another. The work of the Committee includes, in particular, systematic discussions on methodological questions. Next year, for instance, the 6th Meeting of the Committee will include a discussion on the methods used in statistical surveys on family budgets.

The Commission has also convened two Inter-African Conferences on Statistics; the second took place at Lourenço Marques in October 1957, and was attended by observers from U.N. and F.A.O.

a) Agricultural Statistics

The work of the Commission is carried on jointly with that of F.A.O. For this reason, delegates from the latter organization have attended several meetings of the Inter-African Committee. The most notable joint activities were the holding of two training centres on agricultural statistics obtained by sample surveys, at Ibadan, in 1953, and Bingerville (Ivory Coast), in 1957. An important F.A.O./C.C.T.A. Symposium is to be held at Accra at the beginning of March 1959, to study the adaptation to African conditions of the 1960 World Agricultural Census recommended by U.N. This follows discussions previously held on the same subject at Lisbon in 1957. In addition, it was decided at the last meeting of the Inter-African Committee on Statistics that consultants, who would be provided by F.A.O. at the request of the Governments concerned, should advise the latter in the preparation and carrying out of the census.

b) Demographic Statistics

A symposium on demographic and health statistics, attended by a United Nations observer, was held jointly with W.H.O., in 1957. This subject was also discussed at the Lourenço Marques Conference. A training centre, concerning three Governments in Africa, is to be organized jointly with the French Government, during the Summer of 1959, at Bangui, Central-African Republic. Other projects are also under way, providing for the attachment of experts to survey missions in neighbouring countries, and for the development of methods for establishing records of population, suited to African conditions. A monograph on population censuses in under-developed countries, written by a French expert, is now being printed.

c) Labour Statistics

A report on the comparability of labour statistics, as between countries of Africa South of the Sahara, prepared by the Secretariat of the Committee on Statistics, will be circulated shortly. It has been recommended that a study be undertaken aiming at completing the classification of occupations adopted by I.L.O. and at adapting it to suit African conditions.

d) A Bulletin is published by the Secretariat of the Committee on Statistics. It has not proved possible, for budgetary reasons, to add to this bulletin a statistical appendix on the area covered.

The activities of C.C.T.A. in the field of statistics include, therefore, discussions between those in charge of statistical departments, and studies dealing with clearly defined problems. On the other hand, C.C.T.A. does not cover the wider subjects mentioned by the Executive Secretary of E.C.A. in his report.

3) Community Development

The Commission has held two Inter-African Conferences on Rural Welfare (a U.N. observer attended the second, at Tananarive, in 1957), and has now decided to concentrate its efforts on the study of practical problems arising within a given area, for it seemed to the Commission that surroundings play a fundamental part in the problems of community development as a whole.

A symposium is to be held in April 1959, at Accra, for the benefit of those in charge of community development in West Africa. A series of study tours for twelve of these persons will be arranged during the Summer, in West Africa, and probably in East Africa. The U.N. Secretariat has shown interest in these two meetings and C.C.T.A. hopes it may be able to provide financial help for the organization of these tours.

Several other activities, arranged for the coming months, are indirectly related to community development: F.A.O./C.C.T.A. Agricultural Extension Centre, in July 1959, at Ibadan; Symposium on Child Welfare in Rural Areas, at Lagos, in March 1959, etc.

It is expected that similar projects will be arranged for other sub-regions of Africa South of the Sahara.

4) Housing and Urbanization

C.C.T.A. includes a very active Committee on Housing and Urbanization, and a permanent Secretariat, which circulates information. The first Inter-African Conference was held in 1952, at Pretoria. A very important Conference on housing and urbanization will be held at Nairobi on 15th January 1959. The preliminary reports sent in, dealing with the various aspects of the problem, both social and technical, cover about 1,800 pages. Many observers from International Organizations are expected to attend. At the request of U.N., copies of the preliminary reports have been sent to the regional Economic Commissions for Asia and Latin America.

In the economic field proper, the work of the Commission has been very limited. We may, however, mention the Inter-African Indigenous Rural Economy Conference, held at Jos, in 1949, the informal meeting of Heads of West African Economic Departments, held at N'Gor (Dakar), in November 1958, as well as the Inventory of Economic Studies and the Factual Study of National Accounting Systems mentioned above.

Economic matters are not one of the major technical activities of C.C.T.A.