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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Second Conference of African Statisticians
26 June, 1961, Tunis
Item 5(b) of the Provisional Agenda

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

FOR THE
STATISTICAL SURVEY OF AFRICA

(Note by the Secretariat)

PART 1 : PROGRESS TO DATE

1. The report of the first Conference of African Statisticians made reference to the following aspects of regional co-operation for the Statistical Survey of Africa (including co-operation of the Secretariat with countries) :-

- Training centres for middle-grade staff;
- Exchange of field survey experience;
- Publication of methodological material;
- Aid to countries in the publication of regular statistical series;
- Publication of a bibliography of African statistical publications;
- Demonstration centres in specific fields;
- In-service training facilities;
- Uses of a data processing unit by the Secretariat.

The Conference recommended (paragraph 45 of its report) that the Secretariat should make tentative proposals for regional co-operation on the

basis of the programmes drawn up by countries for the Statistical Survey.

2. Visits by statisticians of the Secretariat, and also by a Regional Adviser appointed under the Technical Assistance Regional Programme, to seven North African and eleven West African countries during the months following the Conference provided an opportunity for reviewing the needs of the countries concerned and the type of regional co-operation that could be helpful. Thus the Secretariat was able to gain some idea of possibilities for regional co-operation even before any country programme for the Statistical Survey had been submitted. In addition, two sub-regional meetings of heads of statistical offices convened by the Executive Secretary and attended by statisticians of the Secretariat, provided valuable information and ideas. The first of these was held in Nairobi from 30 May to 3 June, 1960 and was attended by two ECA statisticians and the heads of the statistical offices of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, the East African Statistical Department and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The second was held in Cairo from 21 to 24 November, 1960 and was attended by two ECA statisticians, a UN statistical adviser and the heads of the statistical offices of Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and UAR. The Tunisian Statistical Office, which was unable to be represented at the meeting, contributed documents. The agenda of the two meetings are listed below.

Nairobi Meeting

- (i) Statistical Survey of Africa:
- (ii) Regional programme of co-operation in 1961
 - (a) Training
 - (b) Study Tour
 - (c) Other Projects
- (iii) ECA meetings in 1961.
- (iv) Miscellaneous (activities of the Secretariat in Trade Statistics).

Cairo Meeting

- (i) Preparation of Country Programmes for the Statistical Survey of Africa
 - (ii) Projects of co-operation in 1961 :
 - (a) Study Tours in field survey techniques
 - (b) In service training for field supervisors
 - (c) Training centres for middle grade personnel
 - (iii) A report by the Secretariat of ECA on plans for the second Conference of African Statisticians and other activities in 1961.
3. The co-operation of the Secretariat with countries has so far taken the following forms :-
- i) Temporary assignment of staff members of ECA to advise a few countries in building up long-term programmes of statistical development (Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, etc.);
 - ii) Short-term assignment of statistical experts in field surveys (countries concerned, Tunisia and Sudan);
 - iii) Helping a number of countries to formulate their Technical Assistance programmes and making appropriate recommendations to UN Headquarters in respect thereof;
 - iv) Consultations with governments in connexion with forthcoming population censuses and demographic surveys;
 - v) Co-operating with the Government of UAR in a case study of the evaluation of the 1960 population census results;
 - vi) Organization in co-operation with the Government of Ghana of a study tour on population census techniques, held in Accra from 3 to 20 June, 1960;
 - vii) Training centres :
 - co-operating with the Government of Morocco to establish a French-speaking sub-regional centre at "attaché" level;

- co-operating with the Government of Ghana to establish an English speaking sub-regional centre at statistical assistant level;
 - co-operating with the Government of Ethiopia to establish an English speaking training centre for various middle grade levels (RSA certificate in first term);
 - establishing with the government of the Central Africa Republic a French speaking training centre at various levels, starting from the clerical office level;
 - assisting various governments in setting up national training centres for middle-grade statistical staff;
- viii) co-operating with the governments of France and Gabon and certain UN agencies in the organisation of a demonstration centre in household surveys, for French-speaking participants, to be held in Libreville (Gabon) in August and September, 1961;
- ix) Arranging for in-service training for three statisticians of the region;
- x) Securing the assignment of five regional advisers to the Secretariat to assist countries on a short-term basis. Three of these are already appointed; two sampling experts and one demographer;
- xi) Making preliminary arrangements for the installation and staffing of a mechanical data processing unit, vide paragraph 56 of the report of the first Conference of African Statisticians;
- xii) Preparing and circulating a draft bibliography of African statistical publications;
- xiii) Publishing a statistical newsletter to facilitate exchange of information.

PART 2 : COMING PROJECTS AND FUTURE POLICY

4. The Secretariat's plans for future regional co-operation within the framework of the Statistical Survey fall under the following heads :

- i) Regional advisory services and field service unit;
- ii) Study tours;
- iii) Training centres;
- iv) In-service training facilities;
- v) Mechanical Unit;
- vi) Statistical publications and ECA Statistical Newsletter;

The last two of these are covered in papers Nos.E/CN.14/Stat/L.15 and E/CN.14/Stat/L.19 : the others are reviewed below.

5. The regional advisory service, financed under the Technical Assistance budget of the United Nations, is intended to place at the disposal of African countries the services of highly qualified experts in specialized fields; for short-term assignments not normally exceeding 4-6 months. The services of these experts will be available to African governments on request to the Executive Secretary of the Commission. The needs that it is desired to provide for are those that a specialist can deal with fairly promptly, particularly the determination of how to go about some proposed course of action.

6. This service is an experimental measure and future policy in respect of it will depend on the extent that it proves its utility in practice. The initiation of it came about because of the difficulty of recruiting highly qualified experts on very short contracts. The way to overcome this difficulty seemed to be to group together short assignments in similar fields, so that in the aggregate they would make possible the offer of contracts for a year or longer. So far two fields have been provided for, sampling and demography. The Secretariat will be grateful if countries will indicate other fields in which short-term expert assistance is desired, as

it may be that the number of possible short-term assignments would justify the recruitment of additional regional experts for one or two years.

7. The field service unit will organize regional programmes, advise countries on development of statistical programmes and help countries to formulate Technical Assistance requirements.

8. It is proposed to organize two study tours during the latter half of 1961, under the Technical Assistance programme. Firstly the participants in the second Conference of African Statisticians will be invited by the Tunisian Statistical Office to observe the agricultural survey and the survey of trades and crafts. (For details, please see ECA's Statistical Newsletter for January, 1961; last page). This tour will last for 4-6 days, immediately after the Conference. The United Nations will offer a per diem allowance to the participants. Secondly, a study tour to observe the multi-purpose sample survey to be conducted on a national scale in Morocco and the proposed agricultural census and such other field surveys as may be in operation in UAR at the time will be arranged for September - October 1961. The UN will pay for the travel costs and subsistence of ten or so participants. (for particulars of the Moroccan multi-purpose survey, please see the Statistical Newsletter for April, 1961).

9. It is the opinion of the Secretariat that study tours held in connexion with field surveys are among the most useful forms of regional co-operation in the present-day conditions of most African statistical work. (In this context, reference is invited to paragraph 34 of the report of the first Conference of African Statisticians, in which a similar view was expressed). The Secretariat will accordingly be very interested in suggestions for further action in this sphere in 1962 and 1963.

10. In the sphere of training for middle-grade statistical staff the Secretariat has favoured a very flexible policy of establishing or supporting the establishment of sub-regional centres.

The result envisaged a network of sub-regional centres, suitably located, offering training in French or English, as appropriate, at levels suited to local needs. Thus the Moroccan centre will probably be at professional level and the Centres of Ghana and Addis Ababa at an intermediate level, whilst the centre projected in Bangui will be slightly above clerical level. It remains to be seen how far countries' own training centres will need to be supplemented by sub-regional ones. At present Madagascar and Nigeria have expressed a preference for setting up their own training facilities with UN Technical Assistance and discussions with a similar object are proceeding between the Secretariat and some other countries. It is the opinion of the Secretariat that wherever possible the curriculum of a sub-regional centre should be linked to some definite examination standard as far as mathematics and elementary statistics are concerned; e.g., the examinations of the Association of Incorporated Statisticians for English-speaking trainees and the diplomas of the Institut français de la Statistique for French-speaking trainees. This policy, it is thought, would greatly facilitate recognition on a regional basis of the certificates awarded by the Centre.

11. At the sub-regional meeting of heads of statistical offices held in Cairo in November, 1960, all participating countries offered to receive statistical personnel from other African countries to study their statistical organization or to observe any particular project or for in-service training in any specific branch of statistics. The Government of Tunisia, which was not represented at the meeting, has since expressed its willingness to do likewise. Requests for the financing of such visits will be favourably considered by the UN subject to the availability of funds. Statistical offices interested are requested to submit their suggestions informally to the Secretariat. Few requests for in-service training have as yet been received. So far arrangements have been made for three officers to receive in-service training in Ghana and Tunisia. The facilities that ECA can call upon are all in Africa and the Secretariat would be grateful for guidance from

countries regarding the extent that they are likely to want to use them.

12. It is proposed to organize a seminar on household surveys in 1961 or 1962 and a seminar on population problems in 1962. (Regarding the latter, please refer to Secretariat paper E/CN.14/Stat/L.11). A joint FAO/ECA seminar on the utilization of agricultural census data is also proposed for August, 1961. Suggestions for seminars on other topics will be welcomed by the Secretariat; however, in view of the difficulty that some heads of statistical offices have in releasing staff for attendance at more than a limited number of meetings, it is desirable to bear in mind that certain working groups are also projected, vide items 7(a) and 7(c) of the Provisional Agenda.

13. It is suggested by the Secretariat that close consultation needs to be continued, both between the Secretariat and countries and among neighbouring countries, to review possible projects for co-operative action. This could be done by various means. At its third session the Commission adopted a resolution (No. 23 III) in which it requested the Executive Secretary to "undertake forthwith a study of the possibility of and conditions for the establishment of sub-regional offices of the Commission to deal with problems of sub-regional interest and to submit a progress report to the fourth session". In the event of sub-regional offices being established, each should have a statistician posted to it in order to cover matters in the statistical field. In the meanwhile, the projected field service unit mentioned above would carry out this function from ECA Headquarters.

14. Coordination for any project involving several countries is however best achieved by multilateral contacts. In this connexion the two sub-regional consultations which took place in 1960 were most encouraging. In two or three days of an informal meeting heads of statistical offices can arrive at a number of practical arrangements, as happened in Cairo in November 1960. If the Conference so wishes, such sub-regional consultations can become a regular feature of regional life during the

interval between two conferences of African statisticians, at least in sub-regions in which co-operation is very active. Moreover following a recommendation made by the third session of the Commission at paragraph 247 of its report, it is suggested that a short survey of conclusions should be drawn after such meetings, for circulation in the region as a whole. As an illustration the summary of conclusions of the Cairo meeting is reproduced as an appendix to this paper.

15. Although the first Conference of African Statisticians expressed the view (at paragraph 47 of its report) that ECA might be asked to assist countries in connexion with reproducing or printing statistical documents, no request for services of this type has yet been received. The Secretariat will be grateful for guidance on whether such services are still considered desirable and, if so, to what extent. In this connexion it may be relevant to mention that at the sub-regional meeting of East African statisticians at Nairobi in May, 1960 a suggestion was made that statisticians of the Secretariat who had occasion to visit countries might draw up methodological reports on work done and that these reports might be circulated by ECA to all African countries.

APPENDIX

1961 Regional Programme in Statistics in North African countries

(Summary of conclusions reached at the meeting of Heads
(of Statistical Offices, Cairo, November 1960)

A. Rabat Centre

It was pointed out that a two-year training course for middle-level cadres is being arranged in Morocco, to begin in October 1961.

The Moroccan representatives officially announced that the course would be open to any nationals of other African countries desirous of attending.

Instruction will be given in French.

Conditions of admission for Moroccan students are as follows:

Holders of the baccalaureat in lower mathematics will be admitted automatically.

Candidates having reached the standard of the 1st or 2nd part of the baccalaureat must sit a test.

Those who have passed the 1st or 2nd part of the baccalaureat (in branches other than mathematics) will receive a bonus mark - African countries are requested to observe the above conditions when selecting their candidates.

The standard of the course will be that of the Division des Ingenieurs des Travaux Statistiques, Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique (INSEE), Paris. A lecturer, Mr. CAUSSE, has been appointed under the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme. Others will be appointed by the Moroccan Government. The Moroccan representative will be glad to supply further information, e.g. regarding programmes and curriculum, to the ECA Secretariat and any country interested.

Action:

- i) The Statistical Office of Morocco is to send as soon as possible full particulars of the course to Tunisia (Mr. Bahroun) and to the Commission's Secretariat, which will circulate these particulars to other countries which might be interested.

- ii) A limited number of fellowships will be offered under the UN Technical Assistance programme to qualified candidates nominated by African countries interested in this course. Tunisia has informally expressed interest in sending four nominees.

Application forms will be issued by the end of June 1961 to those countries which have expressed interest.

B. Addis Ababa Centre

The representative from Ethiopia announced that negotiations were under way between his government and the United Nations for the establishment of a regional centre in Addis Ababa for the training of middle-grade statisticians. The Centre would offer a nine-months course at a level defined according to the scale of certificates of the Association of Incorporated Statisticians in London. The medium of instruction would be English. The lecturers will be provided by UN Statistical Office, by ECA and by the government of Ethiopia. This Centre would primarily serve Libya, UAR, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia but applications from candidates from other African countries would also be favourably considered.

Action:

- i) It is expected that the formal agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the United Nations will be signed soon so as to permit the first course to be started in October 1961.
- ii) UN will consider nominations from countries other than Ethiopia for a maximum of 10 fellowships which will cover the cost of travel to and from Addis Ababa and subsistence and training facilities at the proposed centre.
- iii) The Director of the Centre is expected to visit the interested countries in the second quarter of the current year to discuss matters connected with the Centre with the respective governments and to interview candidates.

C. Training facilities Cairo

The UAR representative described the training facilities available in Cairo. The note circulated on this subject is enclosed. While these facilities are available at present to the UAR nationals, the Government of the UAR, it was indicated, would favourably consider applications from nationals of any Arabic speaking country. The medium of instruction is Arabic.

Action:

The countries interested in availing themselves of the facilities offered by UAR are requested to get in touch with the Department of Census and Statistics in Cairo directly or they may indicate the nature and extent of their interest to the ECA Secretariat.

D. Documentation on training

It was agreed in the meeting that each government should regularly circulate teaching materials including lecture notes, syllabi and curricula specially compiled by them for the training of statistical personnel to other interested countries.

Action:

All countries are requested to submit the materials listed above to the Commission's Secretariat at their convenience. The Secretariat will then arrange to circulate the same to other interested countries.

II. In-service training facilities

All participating countries offered to receive statistical personnel from other African countries to study their statistical organization or to observe any particular project or for in-service training in any specific branch of statistics. The government of Tunisia, which was not represented at the meeting in Cairo, has also since then expressed its willingness to offer such facilities to nominees from other African countries.

Action:

- i) Requestes for the financing of such visits will be favourably considered by UN subject to the availability of funds. Arrangements are being made by Mr. Mahajan to enable a senior Sudanese statistician and two field officers to visit UAR and Tunisia to study statistical organization in general and field survey techniques respectively.
- ii) All statistical offices interested in availing themselves of the facilities which the UN Technical Assistance programme may be able to offer under this head are requested to submit informally their suggestions to the Commission's Secretariat as early as possible. Application forms will then be issued through official channels.

III. Study tours and visits on field survey techniques.

As a result of the information provided by the countries represented at the Cairo meeting and Tunisia on the field surveys which these countries were planning to undertake in 1961 and taking note of their desire to exchange experience in this important field the ECA representatives present at the meeting indicated the possibility of organizing two study tours during the latter half of 1961 under the Technical Assistance programme.

A. Visit to Tunisia

The participants to the Second Conference of African Statisticians scheduled to take place in Tunis beginning 26 June 1961 will be invited by the Tunisian Statistical Office to observe the agricultural survey and the survey of trades and crafts. This tour will be organized immediately after the conference and will last from four to six days, beginning around 7 or 8 July.

Action:

- i) ECA will start negotiations with the Government of Tunisia for the organization of this visit. The government is expected to provide transport facilities and UN will offer a per diem to the participants.
- ii) Official invitations for this study tour will then be issued to all government invited to the Second Conference of Statisticians.

B. Study tour in UAR, Morocco

A study tour to observe the multi-purpose sample survey to be conducted on a national scale in Morocco and the proposed agricultural census and such other field surveys as might be in operation in the UAR at that time will be arranged in October-November 1961. All countries represented at the Cairo meeting and Tunisia showed keen interest in participating in such a tour.

The Moroccan survey will be mainly designed to provide statistical data valid at national level for 6 or 8 economic regions on:

population structure by age;
natural population movements - mortality and fertility by age;
unemployment and employment in towns;
employment and under-employment in rural areas;
agrarian structures, production, numbers of livestock, farm implements,
intermediate consumption figures for farm holdings.

The general survey, which is due to begin in October 1961, will be preceded by a pilot survey lasting from May to July 1961.

Action:

- i) The Statistics Departments of Morocco and the UAR are requested to furnish the Commission's Secretariat with particulars of the field surveys in question, including their timing, objectives, scope, sample designs and field organization.

- ii) ECA Secretariat will start negotiations with the two host governments, which are expected to provide transport facilities. UN will pay travel costs and subsistence of 8 participants.
- iii) All interested countries will be officially invited in due time to submit nominations for participation in this study tour as soon as the necessary arrangements have been completed with the two host governments.

IV. Census Data Processing Centre in Cairo

The UAR representatives reported that their Government had undertaken an ambitious programme for the processing of population census data. The IBM machines installed for this operation included six 101 statistical machines. The UAR Government, it was stated, would welcome any observers to study the processing operations.

Action:

- i) A member of the ECA statistical staff will shortly visit UAR to discuss this project further with the Department of Statistics and Census. Arrangements to be made to visit the mechanical installation in Cairo and facilities available will be communicated to the interested countries some time in April-May, 1961.

V. Second Conference of African Statisticians

The Second Conference of African Statisticians is scheduled to take place in Tunis on 26th June 1961. It was suggested at the November meeting that problems relating to the status of statistical personnel in African countries should be put on the agenda for the Conference. Furthermore, the Secretariat was requested to circulate all important documents for the Conference if possible three months before the meeting to enable the countries to study them carefully and prepare briefs for their respective delegations on each subject.

Action:

- i) Status of statistical personnel has been included in the provisional agenda for the Conference.
- ii) The Secretariat will try its utmost to circulate all important documents for the Conference by the first week of April.
- iii) All countries which are preparing long-term statistical programmes are requested to submit the same to the Secretariat by the end of March to enable the Secretariat to process and circulate these to the other countries.

VI. Statistical Newsletter

The participants welcomed the publication of the Statistical Newsletter by the Secretariat and suggested that it should be issued at frequent intervals.

Action:

- i) It is proposed to issue the Newsletter on a quarterly basis during 1961.
- ii) Heads of Statistical Offices are requested to communicate to the Secretariat a list of names and addresses who should receive the Newsletter regularly in their respective countries indicating the number of copies required against each address.
- iii) News of all important statistical activities in each country should be regularly reported to the Secretariat.