



Distr.: GENERAL

E/CN.14/INF/93

27 November 1978

Original: ENGLISH

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

CONFERENCE DOCUMENT

Fourteenth session

Fifth meeting of the Conference
of Ministers

Rabat, 20-28 March 1979



PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXPANDED TRAINING AND
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA

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1. Introduction

It will be recalled that, at its eighteenth meeting held in Khartoum in May 1978, the Executive Committee considered a proposal for the establishment of an Expanded Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa and unanimously approved it for immediate implementation. Accordingly, this paper briefly outlines the nature and scope of the programme and gives a progress report on its implementation since it was initiated during the second half of 1978. It concludes with an appeal for full support and provision of adequate resources for realizing the target set for the programme.

2. The programme

The Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa is the first five-year comprehensive manpower development programme, 1978-1982, to be initiated by the secretariat. It aims at training Africans in a variety of middle- and high-level manpower fields that are critical to the region's economic and social development. The target is to train 8000 Africans in five years, of which 3000 or more are to be trained in Africa, using local institutions. The programme is based on a policy of co-operation and collective self-reliance, that is to say, technical co-operation among African countries in developing the manpower that they require.

3. Justification of the programme

ECA has been co-ordinating bilateral scholarships and fellowships channelled through it for the purpose of training Africans since 1965. This scheme has been very modest in scope and has concentrated over the years on utilizing facilities outside the region for training Africans. It has not been sufficiently effective in adequately relating the use of training and fellowship offers to fields where Africa's manpower needs are critical. Since ECA itself did not make any direct financial contribution to the scheme, it lacked the means to direct training to disciplines and sectors where training was most crucial.

Several developments at the national, regional and international levels have in recent years made African States more aware of the constraints on their development efforts generated by lack of trained manpower and the consequent dependence on external sources for technical and managerial skills and know-how. In particular, the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation and the specific industrial output target set for Africa emphasize the intensification of manpower development programmes and the professional training of management staff.

At the regional level, African States have adopted specific priorities and strategies for socio-economic development as outlined in the "Revised framework of principles for the implementation of the new international economic order in Africa, 1976-1978-1986" (E/CN.14/ECO/90/Rev.3) which required intensified manpower training activities in order to achieve the objectives and production targets set for the various priority sectors.

It is largely in consideration of the foregoing requirements that the fourth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, held at Kinshasa in February-March 1977, adopted resolution 306 (XIII) calling upon the secretariat to take action aimed at fostering intra-African co-operation in manpower development and resolution 318 (XIII) on training for development. Paragraph 2(a) of the latter specifically called for "the mobilization of resources for the operation of a Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa, which should accord priority to the critical manpower requirements of member States". The present five-year training programme has been initiated by the secretariat in compliance with the foregoing mandate.

4. Objectives of the programme

The aim of the project is to expand substantially the ECA programme for the training of Africans in areas of critical manpower requirements; to strengthen ECA machinery for the administration and development of training activities; to foster intra-African co-operation in the utilization and development of training facilities in the region; and to provide the resources that will enable African States to take advantage of in-plant and other training opportunities in third world countries as well as in the industrialized countries.

The immediate objectives of the training and fellowship programme are:

(a) To mobilize African and non-African financial resources for the purpose of establishing an African Training (Fellowship) Fund ^{1/} which will provide the means for training African nationals in technical, professional and management fields identified as critical for African economic and social development, especially with respect to agricultural modernization; industrial, commercial and transport development; and technology development and adaptation. The Fund will also facilitate the intensive use of African training and research institutions and other appropriate governmental, parastatal and private industrial, commercial and research establishments for the purpose of skill training;

^{1/} The African Training (Fellowship) Fund will operate as an integral part of the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development.

(b) To initiate and/or support training and fellowship activities for specialized training of African nationals in critical fields;

(c) To assist existing and planned African multinational training and research institutions in developing local training capability by providing fellowships for the upgrading of their teaching and research staff.

5. Programme design and strategy

The programme is designed to:

(a) Develop and operate substantially enlarged training and fellowship activities directly related to critical manpower requirements of member States in priority development sectors and projects;

(b) Maximize the use of existing post-secondary and other specialized educational and training facilities in the region by fostering technical co-operation among African States in manpower training;

(c) Strengthen existing African institutions through staff development and co-operation in developing specialized courses;

(d) Promote the establishment of multinational training and research programmes and institutions in disciplines and skill areas where the region lacks adequate local training facilities;

(e) Provide "seed-money" from the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development for the purpose of mobilizing additional resources from African and non-African sources for financing training; and

(f) Use non-African training and fellowship opportunities for specialized, post-experience training of Africans in fields where member States are anxious to acquire technology, operational and management skills and know-how.

The programme is accordingly designed to emphasize African collective self-reliance and to seek supplementary resources from non-African sources for the purposes of facilitating and giving strength to technical co-operation among African States. Essentially, it is a tripartite co-operative venture in which ECA, African Governments and institutions and non-African Governments, organizations and foundations are expected to be active partners.

6. Operational scope of the programme and priority training areas

In operating the programme due consideration will be given to changing trends in development strategy and sectoral priorities, country experience of prevailing manpower constraints, fields in which African countries are currently over dependent on foreign skills and technical know-how as well as knowledge of the specific manpower needs of individual countries and of multinational training and research institutions. Special attention will be given to the training needs of the least developed and newly independent African States. Initially, however, the following priority training areas have been identified for support under the programme as outlined below:

(a) Manpower for basic industries and for agriculture

ECA manpower studies and manpower profiles for various basic industries (food and agro-industries, engineering, basic metals, chemical, building materials and construction industries) will reveal specific skill requirements, present and projected, for which Africa has to make a special effort to train nationals in terms of the challenge of the Lima target. Consequently, a major training effort will relate directly to training for the industry sector in general and basic industries in particular.

A combination of training programmes is envisaged, namely, some post-graduate training of one to two years in specialized branches of industrial production, engineering and management; three to six months' practical training in appropriate industries in Africa, other third world countries and in industrialized countries; and sponsorship of industrial production technology and management workshops in African technological universities.

In the agricultural sector, similar priority training and skill shortage areas are to be identified in due course and provided with fellowships tenable in African and non-African institutions. In this sector priority will be given to food production, preservation and storage and processing and related technology.

It is intended to explore, together with UNIDO, FAO and other interested specialized agencies, practical ways of fostering co-operation in programme development.

(b) Graduate training in specialized disciplines

This subprogramme is to cover all sectors where specialist skills are required. Priority will invariably be accorded to industry, agriculture, engineering and technology, natural resources and management. Training is to be undertaken in African and non-African institutions, with preference for suitable institutions in other third world countries. A major objective is to use the facility of this subprogramme to develop local training and research capability in African institutions by facilitating their expanded use by Africans from outside the host countries, and hence developing multinational specialized training and research programmes and institutions. The main programme interest will be for one to two years' specialized training courses.

(c) Training in science, engineering and technology

This subprogramme, in addition to encouraging the use of fellowships and grants offered by non-African donors for training Africans in science and technology disciplines, will give fellowship support to the proposed African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research. According to the needs of African countries for middle- and higher-level technical personnel, it will provide partial fellowships (foreign exchange component or travel fare) facilitating technical co-operation among African countries in training non-national Africans in local technical colleges, polytechnics and technological universities.

(d) Training of teachers and instructors

This is aimed at strengthening national and regional capability to undertake manpower training locally. Teachers constitute a multiplier factor in education and training. Priority is to be given to science teachers, technical teachers and instructors, management educators, commercial teachers and business educators, accountancy teachers and the teaching staff of regional and subregional training institutions. Teachers of other specialized disciplines where Africa is currently over dependent on foreign institutions will also be considered. Fellowship duration should range from three months to a full academic year. Training fellowships should include a short period of practical experience in industry, where appropriate. Exchange of teaching staff for a three-month period in a co-operative arrangement between two institutions providing courses in any of the priority training areas will also be considered.

(e) Group training of African technical and managerial executives

The purpose of this subprogramme is to provide an opportunity for experienced African scientists, technologists, engineers and managers already familiar with local development problems to meet their counterparts in other developing countries or in industrialized countries with a view to appreciating how innovative technology is brought about, applied, developed and managed. The ultimate goal is to facilitate technology transfer and adaptation. In-plant training in industrial, commercial, agricultural or mining establishments will form an integral part of the programme which may range from two to four months in duration.

(f) Training in budget and financial management and tax administration

This is to provide funds for training courses for African tax administrators and other officials responsible for public revenue mobilization and disbursement and for development budget management. Training is to be carried out in Africa and in collaboration with African training institutions which are to be encouraged to assume full responsibility for providing specialized training for public finance officers.

(g) In-plant or practical training in the management of public enterprises and development projects for nationals of the least developed and newly independent African countries

A primary objective of this subprogramme is to help nationals of African least developed and newly independent countries to acquire practical skills and experience in the management of public enterprises and in the planning, evaluation and management of development projects by using enterprises and development projects in relatively more advanced African countries and in other third world countries for "on-the-project" and "in-the-enterprise" training. According to the requirements of individuals, fellowship duration may range from two to four months and may involve study tours of similar enterprises and projects in more than one host country.

(h) Training in solar energy

This subprogramme aims at assisting African countries to develop local technological and management capabilities for the exploitation of the abundant non-conventional energy potentials in the region, in particular solar energy. Priority is to be given to the training of engineers, technicians and administrators involved in research and development activities in the field of solar energy, using the facilities of the existing solar energy research centres in Africa and, as necessary, training and laboratory facilities outside Africa.

(i) Other specialized fields of post-graduate and post-experience training

This provision is additional to the specific subprogrammes outlined above. It is meant to cater to priority specialized training needs in other sectors not already adequately provided for, in particular in such fields as trade and international payments, transport and telecommunications, economics, finance and statistics and other specialized disciplines.

7. Implementation of the programme

Following the decision of the Executive Committee that the Expanded Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa be initiated forthwith and made operational, the secretariat took action for the realization of the programme as follows:

(a) Formal communications were issued to all member States in August and October 1978 to bring the Programme and the decision of the Executive Committee to their attention as well as seek their support for the Programme both as donors and as users. In particular, they were asked to indicate their specific training needs in relation to the priority training fields outlined in the project document for which they would wish to utilize the facilities of the programme in training their nationals. Member States were also requested to provide for the programme concrete support in the form of both cash grants or fellowship and scholarship offers for training in their national institutions. In respect of fellowships and scholarships they were further asked to specify the conditions normally attached to their grants such as the level of annual stipend, tuition and examination fees, books, medical services, holiday allowance, international transportation, number of training places available annually and level and type of training institutions involved.

Since the communications to the French-speaking member States went out late for technical reasons, it is as yet too early to expect responses from this group. As regards the English-speaking member States, several responses commending the programme have been received and some States have indicated their training needs and made nominations. Two countries, both having small population and limited local training facilities, have offered to collaborate with the Programme and one of them actually offered cash grants - the widow's mite - because of its firm belief in the usefulness of the Programme. The secretariat is currently following up the invitation to member States.

(b) The Executive Secretary also invited several non-African Governments, bilateral organizations and foundations in both developed and developing countries to participate in the programme and support African collective self-reliance in training its manpower. While a number of negative response have been received, some positive responses have also been received. For example, Turkey has offered modest cash grants and fellowships. The USSR is expanding its collaboration with ECA in the training field following the Executive Secretary's official visit to the Soviet Union in August. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and USAID are continuing their support in assisting with the training of Africans abroad.

The Netherlands Government has continued its support for the ECA Training and Fellowship Programme. Its annual grants so far constitute the main resources with which the Programme is being sustained. The grant has hitherto concentrated on training African trainers and instructors working in in-service training institutions, including the training of management educators and accountancy teachers, using institutional facilities in African countries. Following the initiation of the Expanded Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa, the Netherlands Government has understandably agreed to broaden the base for the utilization of its fellowship grants within the scope of the new Programme. During 1978 this particular subprogramme provided training for 54 African instructors, educators and training administrators through individual and group training programmes, excluding 114 participants in national and regional training workshops.

(c) In order to cope with the task of developing what could become a major training and technical co-operation effort in Africa, the secretariat has established an appropriate implementation machinery - Training Programme Operations Unit. The Project Management Officer responsible for the Unit has been recruited and he assumed his duties in October 1978. The Unit is currently staffed with two professionals, one Training Programme Assistant and two Secretaries. It is intended to increase the staff resources for the administration of the Programme as more funds become available for programme development. It should also be noted that the ECA Finance Section and the Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office give full support to the programme in the management of its funds, while the Public Administration, Management and Manpower Division of the secretariat provides professional and administrative backstopping to the Programme. In other words, the secretariat has now fully prepared itself to develop the Programme for the attainment of programme objectives and its set targets.

8. Concrete programme support required

The Training and Fellowship Programme offers African countries a unique opportunity to work together to maximize the use of available training institutions in order to ease a major constraint in their development efforts - shortage of skills and know-how. The programme needs funds to be able to train Africans in Africa, in other third world countries and wherever the required skills can be acquired. It needs the offer of training places in local institutions and the award of fellowships and scholarships almost on the same terms as are offered to nationals. The possibilities are within the limits of the resources of each member States. It is a Programme in which all can and ought to participate, rich or poor, each according its means.

Accordingly, the Conference of Ministers is being requested to support the Programme and to urge all member States as well as friends of Africa generously to provide the means for the realization of the full scope of the programme.