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REPORT OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS ON THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN INSTITUTE  
FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

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### Preface

Since its inception, the Commission has devoted considerable attention to facilities required for training of African staff in the field of economic development. Thus the question of establishing a new institute was discussed already at the first session of the Commission.<sup>1/</sup> Moreover, at its second session the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to study the possibility of enlarging and strengthening existing institutions or establishing new institutions for the training of African staff at all levels (resolution 28 (III)). Finally, the Executive Secretary reported to the third session that exploratory work was being undertaken for the establishment of a new institute for training and research in economic development and planning.

As part of the preparatory work, the Executive Secretary convened a panel of experts to consider in some detail, the functions of the institute. The following experts accepted the invitation of the Executive Secretary: M.M. El Imam, National Planning Institute, Cairo, S. Mahroug, Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion, Rabat, Ch. Prou, Centre d'Etudes des Programmes Economiques, Paris, and J. Sandee, Central Planning Bureau, The Hague.

The panel convened from 4 - 7 December 1961 at the Headquarters of the Commission. It had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat, a draft resolution put before the 16th session of the General Assembly on regional institutes for economic development and planning and economic projections and programming centre and documentation on the activities of ECLA and ECAFE in this field. Dr. El Imam was unanimously elected Chairman. After four days of intensive discussions the panel adopted unanimously the following report.

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the first session, para. 51.

Financial estimates for the first five years of the Institute are prepared by the Secretariat and will be issued as an addendum to this document.

REPORT OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN  
AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

A. Introduction

1. The Panel was asked to formulate proposals for setting up, with the assistance of the United Nations Special Fund and under the auspices of ECA, an African institute for economic development and planning. The Panel had at its disposal a working paper prepared by one of its members in consultation with the Secretariat and several documents from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East on similar proposed institutes. The Panel benefited from the assistance of a member of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at New York and also from the participation by members of the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa in the discussions.

2. The Panel was convinced of the advisability of setting up an institute of the type considered because of the increasing importance of planning in Africa and the scarcity of qualified personnel for this purpose. An attempt was made to outline a part of the proposal which African countries might wish to lay before the United Nations Special Fund. The Panel did not report on matters such as the seat of the Institute, its internal organization, administrative arrangements or financial requirements.

3. The Panel went into a detailed analysis of the substance of the work of the institute, in particular its training functions, in order to clarify the issues and to assist in the presentation of a realistic programme by proposing countries. Throughout, specific African conditions were borne in mind, such shortage of qualified personnel which would not only make recruitment of staff difficult, but would also materially influence the number of officials that could be spared by governments to be trained at the Institute.

The Panel realizes that its analysis at this early stage must necessarily be provisional and that actual circumstances prevailing at the time the Institute may come into being and experience gained in its work will enforce deviations from the suggestions of the Panel.

4. The working rules of the United Nations Special Fund allow for the presentation of 5-year programmes. As the Institute must be expected to grow gradually from a very modest beginning, the panel worked out a possible path of five years length along which this growth might take place. In the following, the situation of the Institute in the fifth year of its development is discussed under the headings: planning course, introductory courses, seminars, advisory services, research. Based on this analysis, an estimate is then given of the requirements of staff implied in these activities. The possible pattern of growth of the activities of the Institute in its first five years is then spelt out and this report concludes with a few remarks on the need for co-operation with other agencies.

B. The Planning Course

5. The aim of this course will be to instruct African government officials and other persons concerned with economic planning in the planning techniques useful in their work. The panel feels that the inclusion in the course of many persons not connected with planning might endanger the contacts of the Institute with real planning problems.

6. In its fifth year, the Institute should be able to find at least 15 officials who can be spared by their governments to follow this course. It is hoped however that governments which have expressed their wish that the Institute should be established will find it to their advantage to exceed the minimum number mentioned and to have as many as possible of their planning officials trained at the Institute.

7. The trainees for this course will have to be individually selected in co-operation with governments. Care will have to be taken that they are of a sufficient level of instruction and experience, so as to prevent disappointments to those who would be unable to profit from the instruction offered in this course.

8. The duration of the course should be at least nine months for a number of reasons. The quantity of teaching matter will be large in any case if the teaching of the Institute is to be of real benefit to planning in Africa. Some of the subjects will have to be basic and lead into applied studies later in the course. The first part of the course will also serve to guide trainees towards the optional subjects of study most useful to them. Finally, it is the experience of many other institutes that a duration of nine months should be adhered to have a well-rounded course.

9. Extending the course beyond nine months would make it increasingly difficult to find sufficient government officials who could be spared by their governments. Because of this scarcity, it

will also be necessary to hold only one centralized course at the Institute to which all who qualify would be admitted, while specialization by subjects would be possible within the course.

10. The greater part of the teaching material will have to be collected and prepared by the staff as it will be essential to use African examples and problems as a basis. This preparation of teaching material will require much time and effort particularly in the first years of the existence of the Institute.

11. Similarly, considerable thought and effort should be devoted to developing the most suitable teaching methods, most appropriate to this course. The activities should include not only formal lectures but also exercises, discussion groups, preparation of case studies and other papers. The latter could also serve to assess the value of the course to the participants.

12. A tentative list of the subjects that could be taught is given in the annex I to this report. A large number will be optional in the sense that trainees will be advised to take up some of them according to their personal requirements and abilities. No details of the contents of the subjects to be taught will be given. It is hoped that the list will give an idea of the trend of thinking of the panel which was oriented primarily to planning.

13. The order in which the subjects appear in the list is logical in the sense that related subjects have been put together. During the growth of the Institute, the number of optional subjects would gradually expand. Probably, those optional subjects would be taken on first that are urgently required or comparatively easy to prepare.

14. In the context of the planning course it should be remarked that sometimes it will be possible to organize shorter high-level courses on specific subjects for some of the participants and for trainees especially recruited for these purposes. Because of the short duration, it should be possible to obtain a sufficient number of additional trainees of the desired level.

C. Introductory courses

15. These courses which would take three months have as their major aim to demonstrate, to government officials and others whose work is important to the growth of their national economies, the relationship between the work they are doing and the planned development on which their countries have embarked. These courses may also serve to draw attention to the planning course discussed above.

16. It may be possible to have two groups of 30-40 participants in the fifth year of the existence of the institute. In this case also the trainees should be carefully selected.

17. The courses may either be held at the institute in which case it will also be possible to address special groups such as finance officers, or they may be held elsewhere for instance as summer course in a university or special course in a national development institute. In the case of courses held elsewhere, the international pattern of the institute makes it imperative that participants from neighbouring countries be invited. In such a case it may be possible to adjust the programme to the specific conditions of the region in which the course is held. It may also be possible to use one of the working languages. Such a "local" course could also draw a larger audience of persons who would assist at the course for part of the time only and who need not be selected with the same care as the participants proper. Such local courses would also intensify the contacts between the institute and individual countries.

18. One could visualize that the introductory course, either would deal with general methods used for the preparation of plans or that it would concentrate on particular problems of development. Actually the two types of courses do not exclude each other but are rather complementary, and it will probably be preferable to alternate from time to time general courses of the first type with specialized courses of the second. It would also be possible to use the general introductory course as a preparation for the nine months planning

course while the specialized introductory course would be given by preference to officials who are not likely ever to obtain from their governments a leave of absence of sufficient length.

19. As far as the specialized courses are concerned they could either be given to specialists in the various fields (for instance agronomists, industrial engineers, administrators dealing with external trade problems, financiers) or they could be centred on a special subject. Such courses (for instance, a course on financial matters attracts in the first place, financial experts) are likely to attract primarily but not exclusively workers in that field. In fact the latter approach, i.e. to choose a principal subject for discussion, rather than select specialists in a certain field of work, appears more flexible than the first. It would be possible, for instance, that some countries of the region consider it useful that officials with no experience in finance, but desiring to acquire knowledge of this field, would participate in a course which deals with financial problems. Thus it transpires that the second approach implies lesser degree of specialization: one gains in freedom though losing in technical level. The final decision as to the choice between the two approaches should, however, be reserved for the director of studies. It would, in any case, be possible to use both methods depending on the situation.

20. A tentative list of subjects of the general introductory course is presented in Annex III. As far as the contents of the specialized introductory courses are concerned, they would obviously contain only some of the optional subjects mentioned in connexion with the nine months planning course. A list of suggested subjects is given in Annex III.

D. Seminars

21. The seminars would be convened for senior officials who would be expected to spare two or three weeks of their time to study and discuss a special subject. They may be held at the institute or elsewhere. In the fifth year of the life of the institute it may be possible to hold two of these seminars. They would enable senior officials of African countries to discuss their problems between themselves and with the staff of the institute. It is supposed that some staff members and some visiting specialists would participate in each seminar.

E. Advisory services

22. After some time the institute may be able to provide advisory services at the request of individual countries. A spell of expert duty of a staff member of the institute should however not exceed a period of six months in order to maintain their contacts with the institute. In the fifth year of the life of the institute five staff members might be sent out as experts.

23. A specially interesting form of expert assistance could be the participation of staff members in the national discussion groups which some countries form at the time their development plans are prepared. These discussion groups operate for a few hours weekly with a very large attendance. This participation would enable staff members to study intensively the local planning problems.

24. The institute might also lend staff members and provide other forms of assistance to national planning institutes and similar organizations.

25. On the one hand, the institute might thus provide specialized knowledge, on the other hand, the advisory duties of staff members would enable them to add to this knowledge.

F. Research

26. The main aim of the research of the institute would be to provide materials for the courses, seminars to advisory services of the institute itself. There should, however, also be opportunity to undertake research at the request of African governments. In both ways the research is essential for the functioning and reputation of the institute.

27. In the fifth year, research including the preparation of teaching materials might take up one third of the time of the staff. This proportion would be higher in earlier years. It would in fact approach one hundred per cent in the first year of the institute's life. The case studies made by the participants in the planning course may also contribute research materials.

G. Professional Staff

28. On the basis of the above proposals for the functions of the institute in its fifth year, a professional staff of about 25 persons would seem to be required. This rough estimate agrees on a proportional basis with similar estimates for the proposed Latin American Institute.

29. Very high standards will be required on the part of the professional staff. The reputation of the institute on which its possibility to recruit sufficient trainees and its chances to participate effectively in advisory services depend, will rest mainly on the quality of its staff. The latter will have to prepare the greater part of teaching materials through their own research. This may mean that the staff may have to be recruited among a different kind of specialists as compared to the teaching staff of a conventional academic institute. An additional requirement is that most of the staff should be able to use both English and French which the Panel assumes will be the official languages of the institute.

30. It goes without saying that a high proportion of Africans on the staff should be aimed at from the very beginning.

31. In the above estimate of 25 staff members are included eight or ten assistants who would be trained to become full staff members.

32. Part of the teaching and possibly of the research could be done by visitors to the institute. These visitors could comprise both African and non-African, academic and non-academic specialists. A special stress should be laid on the need for senior planning officials in African countries to take an active interest. The participation of visitors in the work of the institute widens the interest of trainees, allows for an exchange of ideas with the staff and strengthens the ties between the institute and actual planning in African countries.

H. Gradual growth

33. During the first years of its existence, the institute will recruit more and more staff, will collect more and more teaching materials and experience and will acquire, it is hoped, a higher and higher reputation and thereby the opportunity to increase its activity.

34. A certain order in the undertaking of the various activities will have to be observed. In particular it will be wise to start with research and only gradually introduce the first courses: probably beginning with an introductory course and after that a planning course. A tentative schedule of the timing of the first activities of the institute is appended as annex IV to this report.

35. Much will depend on the quality of the first introductory course which should be held as soon as the necessary staff and materials have been assembled.

36. The character of the first planning course deserves special consideration. It will have to be started with less staff materials and experience than later courses. For this reason, the panel discussed the possibility to shorten this first course to say six months. There are however, didactic and other disadvantages connected with such a reduction. The reasons to hold a nine months course apply fully to the first course held by the institute, but it is possible that the number of participants may be lower than in later years.

37. The staff of the institute will probably rise gradually from three, including a director, to the 25 foreseen in the fifth year. The percentage of assistants should also increase over time.

I. Co-operation

38. The efficient functioning of the institute will depend on the measure in which it can enlist the co-operation of other bodies active in its field. The first that comes to mind is the Economic Commission for Africa itself, which at present is already engaged in various training and research activities. An exchange of staff may be possible, and the analysis of planning problem by the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa may provide material for the activities of the Institute.

39. The specialized agencies of the United Nations represented in Africa such as FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, should be approached with requests to provide specialized staff and teaching materials. It would also be necessary to maintain contacts with the Secretariat of the United Nations and its other regional commissions, with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with African Universities research centres and other institutions in this field inside and outside Africa.

40. Finally, the Panel emphasized the necessity of close co-operation with the planning organizations of African governments. Indeed, this is essential for the successful conduct of all its activities.

ANNEX I

Tentative list of subjects for the planning course

Required subjects

- (1) Elementary mathematics.
- (2) Elementary statistics.
- (3) Elementary Commercial Accounting, National Accounts, material balances, input-output tables.
- (4) Capital flows.
- (5) Elementary macro models.
- (6) Agricultural development problems.
- (7) Project formulation and evaluation.
- (8) Investment priorities.
- (9) Current planning in Africa (problems, methods and organization).

Optional subjects

Planning techniques and policies for:

- (1) Management and finance of industrial establishments.
- (2) Raw materials markets.
- (3) Economic and social relationships between town and country.
- (4) Sampling.
- (5) Use of input-output techniques.
- (6) Mathematical programming.
- (7) Imports.
- (8) Exports.
- (9) Taxation.

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- (10) Government expenditures.
- (11) Wages, social security.
- (12) Agriculture.
- (13) Manufacturing industry.
- (14) Transport.
- (15) Education and manpower.
- (16) Health.

ANNEX II

Tentative list of subjects for the general introductory course:

- (1) Elementary statistics (analysis interpretation, margins of error, indices).
- (2) Elementary commercial accounting, national accounts, material balances, input-output tables.
- (3) Elementary macro models.
- (4) Principal methods used for planning in Africa.
- (5) Organization of planning.
- (6) Efficient uses of foreign aid.
- (7) Financing of plans and use of financial flow tables.

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ANNEX III

Tentative list of subjects for the specialized introductory course

Required Subjects:

- (1) Elementary commercial accounting, National accounting, material balances, input-output tables.
- (2) Principal methods used for planning in Africa.
- (3) Organization of planning.

Optional Subjects:

- (1) Agricultural development problems.
- (2) Problems of industrialization.
- (3) Problems of transport.
- (4) Internal trade (trade margins, producers income stabilization).
- (5) External trade (stabilization of raw material prices, African economic co-operation, relations with economic groupings and monetary zones, etc.).
- (6) Education, manpower and health.
- (7) Budget (preparation, connexion with the plan, control of execution, etc.).
- (8) Wages, social security and labour legislation.
- (9) Problems of tax policy.
- (10) Problems of financial policy.

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## ANNEX IV

Expansion of Activities of the Institute other than Research

	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67
Introductory Courses	One*	One	One** Two	Two**	Two**
Planning Course	-	First part*	remainder	One	One
Seminars		One	One	Two	Two
National Discussion Groups	-	-	One	Two	Two
Other advisory services	-	-	One	Two	Three

\* At end of year.

\*\* e.g. one at Institute, other elsewhere.

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