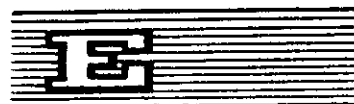




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THE NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CAPABILITY PROGRAMME (NHSCP)
TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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Introduction

1. It is envisaged that the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) will be established in about 85 developing countries of the world over the next 10-12 years. The African region will play a prominent role in the Programme by virtue of the large number of countries of the region to be covered (42 out of the 85) as well as the headway that the African Household Survey Programme has already made.

2. The essential requirements of a national household survey capability have been considered elsewhere (see draft agenda item 3) and it was noted that many countries of the region would require assistance, time and resources to develop the capability and put it to effective use. While a portion of the resources will be provided by the participating countries themselves, they would need substantial support and assistance from external sources before they are able to develop the necessary capability to be self-reliant in survey taking. Individual requirements of assistance will vary from country to country depending on the state of its statistical system and past survey experience. However, it is clear

that the countries will require external support in the following areas: (i) technical advice, (ii) training of survey personnel, (iii) equipment and (iv) local costs.

Technical Advice

3. Almost all countries need guidance and technical advice in the planning and organization of surveys. Very few countries have at present trained and experienced statisticians in adequate number to handle all aspects of survey-taking. There is a particular shortage of expertise in the fields of survey methodology, cartography, electronic data processing, data evaluation analysis and presentation of results. Continued guidance and advice in these fields will be required from outside experts until the local staff are able to take over on their own. External assistance will also be needed in specialised subject fields such as labour force and employment, population and demography, health, nutrition, etc.

4. In some developing countries, especially those which are fairly advanced statistically, technical advice through seminars, periodical workshops and brief consultancy missions by members of the regional team of experts of the Economic Commission for Africa will probably suffice, but other countries will require more sustained assistance through country-based experts. It will be the aim of the Programme for the countries to become fairly self-reliant in survey-taking in the shortest period possible. The present expectation is that many countries will reach this capability in about 4 or 5 years, after which they would no longer need long-term expert advice.

Training

5. Training of survey personnel is a major component of the Programme. There is an all-round shortage of trained personnel, especially in such areas as survey methodology and electronic data processing. Many countries will probably need to utilise training institutions outside their countries for training their staff. Training will be required not only in the specialised fields relevant to sample surveys, but also in the basic discipline of statistics to turn out middle-level and senior-level professional statisticians to support the survey programme. Arrangements will have to be made for training of existing staff as well as a number of others in order to meet fully the requirements for trained personnel. The participating countries need liberal assistance by way of fellowships, travel costs, etc., to enable them to send their staff for training at regional and international statistical training institutions. These institutions may have to expand their training facilities and re-orient their training courses to accommodate the special requirements of the NHSCP, a process that has already begun. The subject of training is dealt with in more detail elsewhere (see draft agenda item 8).

Equipment

6. Most countries will need equipment, in the form of transport vehicles, additional computer facilities, printing and other reproducing machinery, for efficient and timely survey operations. These involve high-cost initial inputs which some countries will find difficult to provide for wholly within their national budgets. They will need external assistance for getting the equipment.

Local Costs

7. The Survey Programme implies fairly large and recurring commitments of expenditure on staff salaries and allowances, travel, maintenance of equipment, office overheads, etc. Some least-developed countries facing difficult financial conditions will require considerable contributions to their local costs during the initial stages to make headway in the Programme.

National Commitment

8. It should be emphasised that external assistance in the above-mentioned forms would be entirely dependent on the willingness of participating countries to allocate their share of the necessary resources to establish or strengthen permanent instruments for carrying out household surveys and to continue these activities on their own after the end of the external assistance.

Funding and Delivery of Assistance

9. In view of the large magnitude of the Programme (spread over many countries of the region) and the specialised types of assistance required, the support of a number of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies will be sought to supplement the resources of the country as soon as a country decides to participate in the Programme. Much of the assistance will be in the form of bilateral aid going directly from the donor agency to the recipient country. Donor agencies will be requested to assist in one or more of the following ways: (i) bear the entire cost of assistance required by a country, (ii) bear the cost of services of technical experts, (iii) offer fellowships for training, (iv) supply transport and other equipment or funds for their purchase and (v) share part of the local survey costs. The initial response to the request is encouraging and it is likely that many bilateral and multilateral agencies will provide substantial support to countries with which they already have an active technical cooperation arrangement.

10. In seeking support for the Programme, every effort will be made to take advantage of technical cooperation among developing countries. A number of developing countries are fairly well advanced in household survey techniques and they could share their experience with others, for example, in training and survey design.

11. The statistical divisions of the regional commissions are serving or will serve as the regional advisory resource centres of the NHSCP and take a leading part in its implementation. In the case of Africa, the African Household Survey Capability Programme is a precursor of the NHSCP, of which it is now a part, and the overall coordination of the Programme in the African region is the responsibility of the Statistical Division of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), working in close collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and interested Specialised Agencies. In addition to promoting technical support and advice, the ECA Statistics Division assists in the formulation of the country survey programme and the preparation of country projects.

12. The United Nations Statistical Office is responsible for the promotion of the Programme, its coordination at the world level and its balanced development. It will help in the negotiations with national and international agencies for securing resources and matching them with the requirements of participating developing countries. It will also help maintain technical standards and disseminate technical information. The United Nations specialised agencies, and in particular ILO, FAO, WHO and UNESCO will provide expert advice on surveys falling within their spheres of interest through technical recommendations and guidelines.