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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Under the United Nations programmes of technical cooperation, assistance in the field of statistics is provided to governments on request, and comprises :

- (a) the provision of expert services to Governments, both on matters of organization of national statistical services and on the development and improvement of individual subject fields for which United Nations has responsibility (e.g. economic statistics : including national accounts, input-output, transport, external trade, energy, industrial and wholesale price statistics, and statistics of distributive trades and financial flows; demographic and social statistics : including population, vital, housing and migration statistics; conduct and interpretation of sample surveys; and the training of government statisticians);
- (b) the organization and direction of seminars;
- (c) the organization and direction of training courses;
- (d) the provision of fellowships either for participants in seminars and training courses or for specific individual study.

In Africa, United Nations programmes of technical cooperation are contributing substantially towards helping countries in the region to achieve the long-range objectives of the Statistical Survey of Africa - which envisages the development, within a five-year period, of the economic and social statistics required for planning.

To meet the needs of countries requiring direct assistance, provision was made in the 1963-64 programme for expert services in a variety of subject fields, and by the end of June 1963 a total of 38 experts had been appointed to serve in 20 countries in Africa. Following a list of the countries to which these experts have been assigned showing the fields of statistics in which advice is being rendered. For those requests in the approved programme which remain unfilled, efforts are constantly being made to locate suitable candidates.

COUNTRY	S U B J E C T F I E L D S							
	Statis- tical Organiza- tion	Statis- tical Train- ing	Econ. and Finan. Stats.	Indus- trial statis- tics	National accounts	Exter- nal trade stats.	Demo- graphic stat.	Sample Surveys Data pro- cessing
CAMEROUN	x							
CONGO (Brazza)	x							
CONGO (Leo.)	x							
ETHIOPIA	x					x		
GHANA		x		x			x	x
GUINEA		x						
KENYA							x	x
LIBYA	x		x					x
MADAGASCAR							x	
MALI	x	x						
MOROCCO		x					x	x
NIGER	x							
NIGERIA		x	x				x	
SENEGAL							x	
SOMALIA	x							x
SUDAN	x					x		
TANGANYIKA		x						
TOGO								x
TUNISIA					x			
UGANDA					x			

In addition to the experts requested by individual governments, five regional statistical advisers are available to countries requiring short-term consultative services in the following specialized fields : national accounts, demographic statistics, sample surveys and public finance statistics. The services of these advisers may be requested directly from the Economic Commission for Africa, to which they are assigned.

It is readily recognized that one of the major obstacles to the improvement of statistics in Africa is the shortage of properly trained staff, and for this reason concerted efforts have been directed to the development of training facilities. Apart from the provision of UN training experts requested by individual countries, a number of full-time training centres have come into operation at the middle level, and one at the university level - United Nations support being supplied, through technical assistance funds, in the form of directing and teaching staff, fellowships and equipment.

Full-time middle-level centres were established at Achimota, Addis Ababa and Yaoundé by United Nations in cooperation with the Governments of Ghana, Ethiopia and Cameroon. The services of directors for each of these three centres have been provided by the United Nations. A centre at middle level is operated independently by the Ivory Coast Government at Abidjan, UN fellowships being provided for participants from countries other than the Ivory Coast. In 1962 these centres completed their first training session lasting for one academic year (except for Yaoundé, which commenced operations only in time for a six-months course); they have trained 81 students from 21 countries in Africa. Participation of 46 of those attending was made possible through the award of United Nations fellowships. For the 1962/63 sessions at these same centres, total enrollment increased to 97 students.

A university level centre is in operation at the University of Rabat. Sponsored by the Government of Morocco, with United Nations assistance, this centre provides a two-year course at the attaché level. The services of a Director and Deputy Director of Studies, as well as two lecturers, have been provided by the United Nations. The two-year course which began in November 1961 is being attended by 22 students from Morocco and 19 from Tunisia, the latter on UN fellowships. Facilities have been provided to accommodate a second group of students for the first year of the session, which began in November 1962, and UN fellowships were made available for this purpose to participants from Algeria, Guinea, Cameroon and Mali.

In addition to the fellowships which have been awarded by the United Nations for study at the training centres mentioned above, on the basis of requests received from a number of countries, provision has also been made in the 1963-64 programme for fellowships to be awarded for study abroad.

Technical assistance funds have also been effectively utilized for regional group activities, which are designed to promote the exchange of technical information between countries, and to enable methods to be adapted for application under African conditions. These include seminars and study tours, as well as short training courses. Following is an account of some of these activities since the last session of the Conference of African statisticians.

A seminar on External Trade Statistics was convened in Addis Ababa with technical assistance help from 29 November to 7 December 1961, and was attended by 30 participants from 22 countries. It considered the application of recommendations for the improvement of external trade statistics made by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and its Statistical Commission. Recognizing the recommendations on the compilation of external trade statistics were designed primarily to increase the usefulness of their statistics to the compiling countries themselves as a basis for policy-making, the

Seminar considered ways of applying the recommendations in the African countries so that a regular flow of current data would be available. A Seminar on Industrial Statistics, similarly held in Addis Ababa from 18 to 27 July 1962, was attended by 18 participants from 14 countries. The purpose of this Seminar was to render assistance to African countries in planning and carrying out statistical enquiries relating to industry, with particular reference to United Nations 1963 World Programme of Basic Industrial Statistics.

Study tours provide a means of demonstrating clearly the practical aspects of many types of statistical collection and processing. Among those which have taken place in Africa under Technical Assistance auspices include one in Ghana to enable persons from other African countries to see work on the population census and post-enumeration survey; another of short duration following the Second Conference of African Statisticians in Tunisia enabled some of the delegates to see local survey work in progress; and a tour which took place in Morocco and the UAR covered survey projects in those countries.

Experience gained in the use of short training courses indicates that they provide an effective method of giving training in specialized fields for participants at a sufficiently senior level. In Ghana a course on population census techniques was organized in 1961, intended mainly to assist persons who would be engaged in similar work in their own countries. During the summer vacation in the same year a course on household surveys was conducted in Libreville, Gabon.

In 1962 Technical Assistance organized two sub-regional meetings of heads of statistical offices in West and North African countries in order to afford an opportunity to review the training programmes for statistical personnel, both at the national as well as at the sub-regional level. The meeting in West Africa was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 3 to 6 April and was attended by representatives of fourteen African countries. The meeting of heads of North African statistical offices was held in Khartoum from 3 to 5 December 1962 and was attended by representatives of seven African countries.