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THE AFRICAN POPULATION PROGRAMME

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## I. BACKGROUND

1. The General Assembly, in its unanimously adopted resolution 2211(XXI), had called upon the regional economic commissions and other bodies to develop and strengthen regional and national facilities "for training, research, information and advisory services in the field of population, bearing in mind the different character of population problems in each country and region and the needs arising therefrom". The importance of strengthening population work at the regional level was further emphasized during the discussions of the 43rd session of the Economic and Social Council in 1967 when the Secretary-General informed the Council of the establishment of a Trust Fund for population activities aimed at expanding on a global scale the commitment of the United Nations in respect of population work. The Trust Fund (now called, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and administered by the United Nations Development Programme) as envisaged in the Secretary-General's proposals, was to be largely devoted to the development of regional and national facilities. These proposals, together with ECOSOC resolutions 1279(XLIII) and 1347(XLV), which urge all organizations within the United Nations system to make every effort within their competence to develop and render more effective their programmes in the field of population and call upon the regional economic commissions to report on population aspects of economic and social development, set the stage for a fresh assessment of individual regional population programmes.

2. Population work at the regional level began in the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in 1961, and was strengthened with the establishment of a Demographic Section in 1964. An African Population Programme has been developed over time in consultation with United Nations Headquarters, especially from late in 1966. Proposals for expanded work in population (including the organization of an African Population Conference) were placed before the Fifth Conference of African Statisticians in 1967 and were endorsed in principle.<sup>1/</sup> In 1968, a Population Programming Mission for Africa was set up by the United Nations in order to advise the Secretary-General on the direction in which expanded activities could best be developed for the benefit of the countries of the region. The report of the Mission<sup>2/</sup> was

1/ Report of the Fifth Conference of African Statisticians, 1967 (E/CN.14/CAS.5/23)

2/ Report of the United Nations Population Programming Mission for Africa, (E/CN.14/INF/32; ST/SOA/SER. R/8).

discussed by the Ninth Session of the ECA, and the work programme for 1969-71, which took into account the Mission's recommendations <sup>1/</sup>, was also approved by the Commission.

3. With these directives, the African Population Programme was finalized in March-April 1969 in co-ordination with United Nations Headquarters. This programme took into account the regional character of population problems, and is of a somewhat smaller dimension than the Asian Population Programme. The Programme became operationally effective with effect from 1 September 1969 when funds were allotted from the UN Fund for Population Activities.

4. The Sixth Conference of African Statisticians, meeting in October 1969, endorsed the Programme and suggested some specific areas of population studies; it also recommended that a Division be created at the ECA Secretariat, responsible to the Executive Secretary, for the effective implementation of the Programme. <sup>2/</sup>

5. As from 1 January 1970, a Population Programme Centre has been established at the Secretariat, directly responsible to the Executive Secretary. At the opening address to the ECA Technical Committee of Experts, 10-14 February 1970, he described the present functions and responsibility of the Centre as follows: "The tasks of this Centre seem to me at this initial stage to comprise creating awareness of the population situation in Africa; helping governments to set up offices for handling population problems; training personnel for such offices and assisting governments, at their request, in their formulation of population policies".

6. The Technical Committee, recognizing "the immense responsibility for the quality of human life in future generations" (in the words of the Secretary General of the United Nations) in all its aspects, gave further thrust to the African Population Programme by identifying specific areas of population research, and action. <sup>3/</sup>

7. The following programme includes the recommendations of the Technical Committee of Experts (1970) the Conference of African Statisticians (1967 and 1969), the Seminar on Application of Demographic Data and Analysis to Development Planning (1969), and the Working Group

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1/ Budgetary Requirements of the ECA Programme of Work and Priorities, 1969-1971 (E/CN.14/441).

2/ Report of the Sixth Session of the Conference of African Statisticians 1967 (E/CN.14/A56/27)

3/ Report of the First Meeting of the Technical Committee of Experts (E/CN.14/474).

on Fertility Studies and Evaluation of Population Programmes (1970).

8. To operate the African Population Programme, the Population Programme Centre comprises now two substantive sections on "General Demography" and "Fertility and Population Programmes and Policies"; a third section on "Development and Training" is proposed to be established shortly and will include the Information Service and Clearing House Unit, currently responsible directly to the Director of the Centre. The Centre has had recently the benefit of the advice of the United Nations Administrative Management Survey Review Team in the organization of its administrative operations.

9. Close collaborative relations have already been established with the United Nations Population Programme Officers working in African countries, and consultations with United Nations agencies and Non-governmental Organizations are proposed to be undertaken on a regular basis.

10. Interest in population problems among African Governments is of very recent date. During the late 1950s and the 1960s, nation-wide population surveys were taken in all but two African countries nevertheless, the registration of vital statistics continues to be deficient. The development of demographic statistics in Africa has been undertaken mostly by the regional advisers in this field. Most countries of the region lack national facilities for demographic studies and training; consequently there are in general no proper studies of population trends and structure and their implications for economic and social development. A recent hopeful feature in the region has been the adoption of national population programmes in six countries and the fact that a large number of other Governments permit non-governmental organizations to operate family planning activities and in some cases provide facilities: the population of these countries represents over two-thirds of the total population of Africa.

11. The problems relating to the general inadequacy of the public infrastructures to meet the growing needs of the population in urban areas and for education and employment have received attention in a number of African development plans such as those in Kenya, Tunisia, Mauritius, Morocco, Ghana, Madagascar, Congo (Kinshasa), Congo (Brazzaville), Ivory Coast, Gabon, Sudan, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Central African Republic, Togo and Uganda.

12. In view of all these considerations, therefore, the United Nations African Population Programme is being geared to meet the direct needs of the countries of the region with respect to demographic analysis, the study of the relationship between population trends and economic and social development, and studies of population policies which arise from these trends.

13. The United Nations Population Programme in Africa was begun much later than those in other regions and, therefore, is lagging behind. Countries in other regions are also in a better position with regard to national facilities for research, training, and operational activities. Rapid expansion of the African programme is therefore called for, so that it may reach a level comparable with that of the other regions and so that African countries may be provided with services in those fields where their needs are most immediate and acute. The African programme outlined here should, therefore, be viewed as a minimum work programme. If more funds and staff resources become available, it should be possible to undertake additional projects in the region.
14. The ECA secretariat has worked in the designated population fields of studies, training, technical meetings, and assistance to Governments, but because of a lack of staff, much of the work has been of an ad hoc nature, rather than planned on a long-term basis.
15. The regional centre for demographic training and research in Cairo, United Arab Republic, has provided training and research facilities for the countries of North Africa and the Middle East since 1963. It is anticipated that these activities will be strengthened and expanded to meet the needs of Governments of the region. Missions have also been undertaken for the establishment of facilities for demographic training and research for countries south of Sahara.
16. At present the Population Programme Centre has a professional staff complement of nine members, supported by two research assistants and two regional demographic advisors. Although this is a considerable improvement over the staffing situation prior to the establishment of the Centre, there is still an urgent need for an increase in staff to carry out all the projects outlined in the work programme; it is expected that this need will be fulfilled shortly.
17. The programme in this document deals mainly with activities at the regional level and the training facilities which are considered most urgent. The operational activities implied in the programme go beyond regional advisory services, technical meetings, training activities and field surveys.
18. The programme outlined here is regional; it is not possible of course, to formulate specific country project proposals. Suggestions have been made, however, by the United Nations Population Programming Mission for Africa, and requests are beginning to come from Governments for experts and other assistance for their population programmes. It is anticipated that the ECA programme, particularly regional advisory services and technical meetings, in close collaboration with the work of the Population Programme Officers, will help countries both to be better informed about the United Nations resources directly available to them from the UN Fund for Population Activities and to avail themselves of these resources in a more efficient manner.

19. All related ECA staff services, including the regional advisers on social development and public administration, will be used in implementing the proposed expanded programme.

20. The African Population Programme is being implemented in close collaboration and co-ordination with the United Nations Population Division and, as mentioned above, the Population Programme Officers stationed in Africa, with respect to the countries which they have been assigned to cover. This will further ECA involvement in country projects and will also support the role of the Population Programme Officers as part of the United Nations programming machinery. The ECA demographic staff are visiting a number of African countries, with the approval of the Governments, to undertake specific demographic studies, to set up effective channels for the exchange of information and to identify areas that need strengthening and assistance from the United Nations system.

## II. FUNCTIONS

21. The Population Programme Centre of the ECA Secretariat should intensify the following functions:

(a) Preparation of studies and reports on population size composition and trends as well as on demographic aspects of economic and social development required by the Economic Commission for Africa;

(b) Collaboration with and assistance to the various branches of the ECA secretariat in providing information required on population trends and interrelationships between population and economic and social factors;

(c) Provision of advisory services through regional advisers and the demographic staff, at the request of Governments, in all fields of population;

(d) Assistance to Governments, on request, in organizing training, research and operational programmes in all fields of population;

(e) Provision of information on population and preparation of manuals and other publications for use of member Governments and institutions;

(f) Promotion of training and research through regional or sub-regional centres;

(g) Initiation of co-ordination and collaboration on population questions with the specialized agencies concerned and with internationally oriented governmental and non-governmental organizations at the regional level; and

(h) Organization of regional conferences, seminars, expert groups and study-tours on population.

22. The problems of the development of demographic statistics in the region are dealt with by the Research and Statistics Division of the Secretariat in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the UN and in co-ordination with the Statistics Divisions of the UN specialized agencies: such development is a major premise to the expanded population programme.

### III. PROGRAMME OF WORK

#### 1. Continuous Service Functions

23. (a) Assistance to the ECA Secretariat in providing required information on population levels and trends;

(b) Organization of regional conferences, seminars, expert groups and study tours in all population fields and provision of technical advisory assistance to supporting national meetings;

(c) Assistance to the Secretariat in the preparation and conduct of regional seminars and training courses in related fields; and

(d) Co-ordination with UN specialized agencies concerned and with other governmental and non-governmental organizations on population questions at the regional level.

#### 2. Studies and Technical Work

##### 24. (a) Population Trends

(i) Preparation of reports on the demographic situation in the region, including analysis of the economic and social implications of population trends;

(ii) Analysis of census and other demographic data pertaining to countries where technical personnel for such analysis are not available;

(iii) Evaluation of the accuracy of demographic data obtained from censuses and sample inquiries for selected countries of the region;

(iv) Preparation of population estimates for the African countries after evaluation and necessary adjustments;

##### (b) Fertility

(i) Preparation of studies on levels and trends in fertility, including evaluation and adjustment of data;

- (ii) Design, execution and analysis of demographic surveys including fertility surveys and co-ordination of such surveys in African countries;
- (iii) Study of differential fertility on the basis of social, economic cultural and ethnic groupings in respect of rural and urban areas with special attention to high and low fertility groups;
- (iv) Study of age patterns of fertility in national and sub-national groups;
- (v) Marriage patterns in African countries and their effects on fertility.

(c) Mortality

- (1) Studies on levels and trends of mortality including infant and childhood mortality after evaluation and adjustment of data;
- (ii) Study of Mortality differentials in economic, social, cultural and ethnic groups in rural and urban areas; and of
- (iii) Age patterns of mortality in African countries.

(d) Migration and Urbanization

- (i) Studies of volume and structure of international migration and its effect on population growth and economic and social consequence in the region.
- (ii) Study of the problem of refugee population in specific countries and its demographic and social consequences;
- (iii) Study of the volume and implications of migration to big cities in selected countries such, as Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana Morocco, Senegal, Congo (Kinshasa) and Ivory Coast;
- (iv) Study of levels and trends of urbanization in Africa and their economic and social impacts; and of the
- (v) demographic, economic and social consequence of migratory labour.



(e) Demographic Aspects of Economic and Social Development

- (i) Implications of population trends on investment needs in different sectors of economy;
- (ii) Inter-relationships between population growth, migration and labour force participation;
- (iii) Demographic aspects of manpower planning;
- (iv) Demographic aspects of educational planning;
- (v) Effects of education on fertility, mortality migration and economic activity;
- (vi) Trends in female labour force participation; and
- (vii) Population growth and food production.

(f) Population Programme and Policies

- (i) Study of the nature, organization and extent of family planning programmes in African countries;
- (ii) Review of objectives and contents of national population programmes;
- (iii) Evaluation procedures in national population programmes including family planning;
- (iv) On request, formulation of and advice on population programmes including motivational studies.

3. Assistance to the Governments

25. (a) Regional advisory services in all fields of population including the analysis of demographic data and inter-relationships between population and economic and social development and their policy implications.

(b) Assistance by the staff of the Secretariat and the Population Programme Officers in identifying areas that need strengthening and assistance from the UN family, including training, research and operational programmes in the fields of population.

4. Information Services and Clearing House

26. (a) Preparation of a periodic newsletter on population activities and programmes in the region;

(b) Preparation of analytical bibliographies on population and related questions in the region;

(c) Preparation of a compendium of information on action programmes in African countries;

(d) Provision & circulation of selective documentation on demographic data and research and studies on various aspects of population problems for use of interested national agencies and institutions;

(e) Exchange of information and promotion of contact on the on-going programmes and studies in the region; and

(f) Preparation of technical manuals, including a manual on planning and evaluation of action-oriented research and programmes.

#### 5. Training activities

27. (a) Regional demographic training and research centre at Cairo: provision of necessary assistance and support;

(b) Assistance in the establishment of demographic training and research centres for the French and English-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa. For the English-speaking Centre, negotiations had been initiated last year with the Governments of Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda. The final decision on the site of the Centre is expected shortly. A mission, comprising representatives of the ECA, Institut National des Etudes Démographiques and Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques visited during March-April this year Congo (Kinshasa), Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Senegal to investigate the suitability of a possible site with the view to initiating negotiations with the host government.

(c) Development of a training-cum-research course on evaluation of basic data and assessment of population growth for the English and the French-speaking African countries;

(d) Assistance in demographic training to nationally and internationally-sponsored institutions such as in Addis Ababa, Dar-es-Salaam, IDEP (Dakar);

#### 6. Conferences, Seminars, Expert Groups, Study Tours, etc.

28. (a) Regional meetings: The following technical meetings have been proposed to be organized during 1969/74.

(i) Already held 1969 First meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the African Population Conference, 29-31 May 1969;

(ii) Seminar on application of demographic data and analysis to development planning: 2-9 June 1969;

- (iii) 1970 Working Group on fertility studies and evaluation on national population programmes, 26-30 January;
- (iv) To be held Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the African Population Conference, 1-3 June;
- (v) Meeting of the Expert Group on Population
- (vi) Regional meeting for United Nations Interagency co-ordination on population;
- (vii) Meeting of Experts from non-African governments, Scientific Organisations and Foundations interested in African Demography;
- (viii) Seminar on Population Data and Use of Computers with Special Emphasis on Population Research (for English-Speaking countries);<sup>1/</sup>
- (ix) Study tour on evaluation of population programmes;

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- (x) Expert Group on techniques of evaluation of basic demographic data;
- (xi) African Population Conference;<sup>2/</sup>
- (xii) Seminar on Population Data and Use of Computers with Special Emphasis on Population Research (for French-speaking countries);<sup>1/</sup>
- (xiii) Meeting of Directors of Demographic Training Centres;
- (xiv) Regional meeting for United Nations Interagency co-ordination on population;
- (xv) Meeting of Experts from non-African governments, Scientific Organisations and Foundations interested in African Demography;

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<sup>1/</sup> Originally proposed to be held in West Germany and financed by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>2/</sup> To be a co-sponsored by the International Union or the Scientific Study of Population and possibly also by the International Parenthood Federation.

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- (xvi) Working Group on National Population policies;
- (xvii) Working Group on communication aspects of family planning;
- (xviii) Working Group on studies of Nomadic populations;
- (xix) Expert Group on Population;

1973

- (xx) Seminar on effectiveness of Family Planning Programmes;
- (xxi) Working Group on Policies affecting urbanisation and population distribution;
- (xxii) Conference of African Demographers;
- (xxiii) Meeting of Directors of Demographic Training Centres;
- (xxiv) Meeting of experts from non-African governments/  
Scientific organisations and Foundations interested  
in African Demography;

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- (xxv) Working Group on National and sub-national population projections for Africa;
- (xxvi) Working Group on Demographic aspects of manpower and Educational Planning in Africa;
- (xxvii) Working Group on Mortality Surveys and Studies in Africa;
- (xxviii) Working Group on Population Growth, Labour Force and Employment Prospects in Africa.

(b) In addition, assistance will be given, where requested, to relevant regional and inter-regional meetings on population and related fields.

7. Field Studies

29. Pilot surveys on fertility and infant mortality will be carried out in selected African countries; it is intended that these surveys will serve as models to be followed by other countries in the region.

#### IV. FUTURE GUIDANCE

30. With the background of the demographic situation in Africa (given in the document No. E/CN.14/POP/20) and the African Population Programme outlined above, the Expert Group on Population may like to provide the ECA Secretariat with guidelines for action in all aspects of studies, information services, training, technical meetings, and advisory services.

31. Concerning the question of a Standing Technical Committee on Population, it may be noted that the 1971 African Population Conference will, after the scientific sessions, be followed by an ECA Conference of Demographers, composed of representatives of African Governments. This may constitute a Technical Committee of the ECA, of the same nature as the present Conference of African Statisticians and the Conference of African Planners.