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REPORT ON
STATISTICAL TRAINING CENTRES

STATISTICAL TRAINING CENTRES

1. At both the First and the Second Conferences of African Statisticians, training was recognized and emphasized as one of the principal factors determining the speed at which statistical services could be developed. It was felt that intensive training programmes were required to cope with the situation characterized in many African countries by:

- (a) an urgent necessity to replace departing expatriate staff with local personnel;
- (b) a general shortage of middle level, sub-professional statistical assistants; and
- (c) a persistent need for rapid expansion of statistical services geared to meet the increasing demands for information required for economic development and planning.

The Third Conference of African Statisticians which met in Addis Ababa early in October, 1963, reinforced these views and recommended a further expansion of training facilities which had been established in the region following the recommendations of the earlier two sessions of the Conference. This paper reviews briefly the training activities initiated or assisted by the Secretariat so far in the field of statistics and presents a summary of future requirements as outlined by the Third Conference of African Statisticians.

2. The Conference of African Statisticians recommendations included basically the following:

- (a) the creation of adequate facilities in Africa, on regional and sub-regional basis, for training statisticians at the professional and middle levels;
- (b) the adaptation of the training to specific conditions prevailing in Africa;
- (c) the co-ordination of training activities among the existing and newly established institutions, so as to avoid costly duplication of efforts; and

- (d) the standardization, in as far as possible of the levels of training throughout Africa, particularly in respect of mathematics and statistical methods at the middle level.

3. Acting on these recommendations, the Secretariat has set into motion machinery that led to the establishment, in co-operation with host governments, of three training Centres, at Achimota (Ghana), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Yaounde (Cameroun). It also made the necessary arrangements for the support of two national institutions, at Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Rabat (Morocco). With the exception of the Rabat Institute, which offers a two year course at the professional level, these Centres cater to the need of training middle level personnel (statistical assistants, non-professional) and provide for a 9 month course. The medium of instruction at the Achimota and at the Addis Ababa Centres is English and they generally receive trainees from countries in West Africa and North Africa (including Ethiopia and Somalia) respectively. The Centres at Yaounde and Abidjan cater primarily to the needs of French-speaking trainees from countries in Equatorial Africa and West Africa respectively. French speaking trainees from any African country may enroll at the Rabat Centre.

4. The following tables show the enrollment at each of these Centres for the years 1961/62, 1962/63 and 1963/64.

ACHIMOTA CENTRE

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of trainees</u>		
	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Ghana	15	12	15 ^{1/}
Nigeria	4	8	9
Liberia	4	6	6
Sierra Leone	2	2	1
Gambia	-	1	1
Total	25	29	32

^{1/} Provisional figures.

ADDIS ABABA CENTRE

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of trainees</u>		
	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Ethiopia	7	7	7
UAR	5	3	3
Sudan	4	4	8
Libya	2	3	-
Basutoland	1	-	-
Somalia	-	-	2
Total	<u>19</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>

YAOUNDE CENTRE

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of trainees</u>		
	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Cameroun	6	6	6
Congo-Leopoldville	4	6	4
Congo-Brazzaville	4	1	9
Central African Republic	3	-	1
Gabon	2	2	1
Chad	1	-	1
Dahomey	1	-	-
Togo	-	2	1/
Mali	-	1	1
Niger	-	1	-
Total	<u>21</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>22</u>

1/ Provisional figures

ABIDJAN CENTRE

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of trainees</u>		
	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u> ^{1/}
Ivory Coast	4	10	10
Mali	6	4	-
Upper Volta	3	-	2
Togo	2	-	-
Mauritania	1	-	-
Guinea	-	16	18
Dahomey	-	2	3
Total	16	32	33

RABAT CENTRE

<u>Country</u>	<u>1961/63</u>		<u>1962/64</u>		<u>1963/65</u>
	<u>First year</u>	<u>Second year</u>	<u>First year</u>	<u>Second year</u>	<u>First</u> ^{1/} <u>year</u>
Morocco	22	20	10	10	10
Tunisia	19	17	2	2	2
Algeria	-	-	13	13	15
Guinea	-	-	5	3	2
Cameroun	-	-	3	3	4
Mali	-	-	1	1	-
Congo (Brazz.)	-	-	-	-	1
Total	41	37	34	32	34

5. Total enrollment at these five Centres has therefore increased from 122 trainees in the first year to over 170 during the current year. To this should be added, to complete the picture, another 25-30 trainees following instruction at the national statistics training operations established by the Governments of Nigeria and Tanganyika at Lagos and

^{1/} Provisional figures.

Dar-es-Salaam respectively, with the assistance of training officers provided under the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme.

The number of UN fellowships awarded for training at regional Centres has been stepped up from about 60 in 1961-62 to over 100 this year.

6. The pattern of UN-Government co-operation followed in establishing the three international Centres, (Achimota, Addis Ababa and Yaounde) was simple, convenient and functional. The UN made provisions for the appointment of the directors of the Centres, for library, laboratory equipment, field work, sundry expenses as well as for a number of fellowships. The UN further enlisted the co-operation of the Specialized Agencies, FAO, ILO, UNESCO and WHO, in delegating members of their field staff to deliver sets of lectures at these Centres in the fields of statistics covered by these agencies. The host governments on their part provided in general for physical requirements of classrooms and hostel facilities, clerical and administrative staff, office equipment and part-time lecturers.

7. The structure of the training course in these Centres consists of three parts, i.e. basic courses, technical courses and laboratory and project work.

8. A serious effort is made to relate the content of the training course to specific conditions in Africa. Practical applications for projects and field work are designed and implemented with a view to involving trainees in actual and detailed experience in the handling of common problems they are apt to meet in statistical operations.

9. The course is open to personnel of statistical offices and other government and semi-public bodies in Africa. Candidates proposed by their governments are accepted within the limits of available facilities when they qualify for the course, i.e., if they have reached the level of school leaving certificate with sufficient command of the language of instruction and basic knowledge in mathematics, and pass the admission tests and/or interviews set by directors of the Centres.

10. The Abidjan Centre, though completely national from the administrative point of view, is being brought to conform, by the approval and efforts of the Ivory Coast authorities, to the standards that are being established at the other three Centres, especially in respect of training in mathematics and statistics.

11. The course at the Rabat Centre offers, as mentioned before, a two academic years programme and aims at producing junior statisticians, (ingenieur des travaux statistiques). Its curriculum includes primarily mathematics, statistical methods, sampling theory, economics, rural economics, economics of under-developed countries, demography, national accounts, mecanography, economic geography, sociology, administration, accounting, agricultural and industrial technology and languages. Practical training and field work is provided for and emphasized through the duration of the course.

12. Trainees are selected on the basis of an entrance examination of the second baccalaureat in mathematics level or on the strength of higher academic qualifications. Physical and administrative arrangements are handled by the Moroccan Government. Technical staff is provided by the University of Rabat and Moroccan Government Departments including the "Service de la Statistique" (Statistical Office). The UN assistance consists of an appointment of a director of studies, three full-time lecturers, part-time lecturing by Regional Statistical Advisers attached to the ECA Secretariat and other technical assistance experts in the area and the award of fellowships to non-Moroccan trainees.

13. Since last year, the interest and assistance of some agencies has been enlisted to expand, on a bilateral basis, the availability of fellowships at some of the Centres. Thus, a number of fellowships were awarded by EEC, FAC and USAID for training at Yaounde and Abidjan and similar assistance has been promised for the current academic year.

14. With a view to clarifying and projecting policies relating to Statistical Training Centres, and acting in particular on recommendations of the Conference of African Statisticians in respect to co-ordination and standardization of Training Courses, the Secretariat convened during the year 1962 two sub-regional meetings of Heads of Statistical Offices, one for West and the other for North and East Africa. The results of discussions in these meetings were submitted to the Commission as document E/CN.14/220 at its fifth session. In addition a meeting of all directors of the Centres was held in Addis Ababa in April 1963 for consultations with the Secretariat on the same topics. This meeting enabled the Directors to consult in detail on the content of the 1962/63 examinations and to finalize curricula and general arrangements for the 1963/64 courses. The general aim was to achieve co-ordination and standardization. It was noted that the principal existing cause of differences in levels between centres arose from differences in the standards of candidates available in various parts of the region. Once this standard was raised in respect of the centres operating at a lower level, a greater degree of uniformity would be possible. Further meetings of Directors of centres would be convened as necessary in the future.

15. The Third Conference of African Statisticians noted that the output of trained personnel from the training centres described in the preceding paragraphs was clearly making a considerable contribution towards meeting the estimates staff requirements in future years. However, it emphasized that a further intensification of training activities was needed if national statistical offices were to play the part expected of them by development planners. The Conference expressed the view that in arranging these activities it was necessary to consider future rather than present requirements and it was particularly important to avoid any decline in standards which would lead to difficulties at a later stage.

16. The Conference noted that a number of national and international agencies were active in developing African training facilities in statistics and it stressed the need for co-ordination between these agencies in order to avoid possible duplication and waste of resources.

17. It was agreed by the Conference that uniformity of curricula and examinations in the principal subjects should be the continued aim for centres operating on an international basis. This was important if the certificates issued were to be accepted by countries as the basis for appointment to government posts. Such standardization did not, however, preclude the possibility of catering for special subregional needs and it was also pointed out that purely national training centres were in a different position in that they could pay much closer attention to local requirements.

18. There was, accordingly, a general consensus that standards of the existing international centres should not be lowered in order to admit less qualified candidates. The solution was to raise the level of prospective candidates and a number of delegations emphasized that this must be done by means of in-service training. Several countries, including Ivory Coast, Liberia and Libya, already had schemes of this sort in operation or planned, and in some cases UN experts were assisting in the work.

19. In order to meet future requirements the Conference recommended the expansion of existing training facilities to include as a minimum establishment of the following:-

- (a) One higher level statistical training centre in English for the region;
- (b) One middle-level centre for French speaking trainees in West Africa;
- (c) one middle-level centre for East Africa;
- (d) assistance to national efforts to prepare staff for admission to middle-level centres either through appointment of training officers or establishment of a mobile training centre.

20. Preliminary investigations on all the four training projects recommended by the Third Conference of African Statisticians are well under way and these will be implemented as and when the resources permit. Support will be also given to the Statistical Institute recently established in Cairo and Accra and other similar national institutes offering higher level courses in statistics within the region through award of fellowships to qualified candidates from African countries. A modest start has already been made in this connexion. Nine fellowships were made available to nominees from Libya, Morocco and Sudan in 1963 to enable them to pursue a 2 year diploma course at the Cairo Institute. Twenty such fellowships tenable at Cairo and Accra have been included in the 1964 Regional Technical Assistance Programme.

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