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RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING *

Rural development has a primary objective of transforming agricultural areas so that they become integral parts of the market economy of the nation thereby raising the standard of living of the rural populations. The rural sector is made up of the human and natural or social, economic and physical forces so that any approach to planning for it must of necessity be interdisciplinary and inter-departmental. In Africa, the rural sector constitutes upwards of 80 per cent of the land area as well as the population of most of the countries, which makes it a strategic sector.

The approaches to rural development that have been adopted widely in many African countries are that of community development and the co-operative. "Rural animation" is also gaining ground as an approach to rural development in some countries. These and other rural development programmes, such as agricultural extension, have hitherto concentrated on promoting development through local institutions at the individual community level but within a national administrative framework. We have had experience with this approach for a considerable length of time now and are in a position to evaluate its effectiveness for purposes of planning and development. We have talked of "planning from above" and "planning from below". One other dimension appears to be missing, however, and this concerns the possibility of a middle course. The rural community approach has its merits for programme implementation; but unless this approach is broadened, a wider dimension of the relationship among the different communities in the rural sector cannot be brought into play. A much more effective means of planning would have been missed.

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The Moshi Conference on rural development^{1/} concluded that "Rural development does not mean isolated programmes of 'popular action', 'communal action', 'community development', 'rural animation', 'mass education', 'agricultural extension', 'rural reconstruction' or any of the terms used in isolated programmes carried out in the rural area or rural community". The Conference saw rural development, rather, as "a total approach to the development of the rural area". The following was agreed upon as indicating the nature and objectives of an integrated rural development programme:

Rural development ... is the product of a series of quantitative changes occurring among a given rural population, the converging effects of which produce in time a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people ... It implies modernisation, which will bring about an increase in productive power, and changes in human attitudes, replacing a sense of dependence on the natural environment with the desire and ability to influence the effects of that environment.^{2/}

The concept of rural development cannot, therefore, be equated with mere programme implementation for rural communities. It is possible to embark upon isolated programmes designed to bring development to hamlets and villages; and rural communities can be developed without a long-range plan for their integration into the economy of the nation as a whole. Many programmes of rural development fall into these categories even though they may be clothed in respectable clichés of the planners. But, to be successful, and to produce lasting results, rural development must be an integrated effort seen within the framework of a national philosophy - a continuing programme that has relevance for, and is co-ordinated with, urban development efforts. This philosophy must be translated into a national plan of priorities and procedures capable of implementation.

Rural development is often seen as an economic activity, and rightly so. Economic activity and economic progress take place not only in periods of time but also in a spatial setting, and they have a social base. Because of the highly integrated nature of social values, attitudes, relationships and economic activities of rural communities, action is required at the physical, psycho-social, organizational and political levels in order to effect any significant transformation of the rural socio-economy. This suggests the need for policies, machinery and action on an integrated basis, so that work on agricultural extension, mass media, rural co-operatives, social welfare and community development, rural health, local government, science and technology, will reinforce each other. Included in any such approach is the stimulation of several factors including the active participation of the rural population, physical and economic factors relevant to rural development, rural human resources development, institutional factors which will ensure a sound framework to support and sustain rural development, and appropriate administrative machinery for co-ordinating the various specialities concerned and for ensuring effective communication at all levels.

1/ ECA, Draft Report of the African Regional Conference on the Integrated Approach to Rural development, 1969, p. 5.

2/ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

The problems of rural development go beyond the confines of single communities and their individual problems. When they do not involve such emotional and political problems as land tenure, rural development involves rural settlement patterns and problems. This is often complicated by the fact that changes in the rural sector are strongly tied to urban development by internal migration processes. As a result, rural development can no longer be treated independently of its consequences for urbanization and for urban development. Both rural development and urban development must proceed hand in hand if severe demographic and economic imbalance, such as the depletion of rural communities of its young educated and able-bodied, and extraordinarily high unemployment rates within the cities, are not to jeopardize any programme of development however well conceived.^{1/}

In order to plan more effectively, therefore, the focus of planning should be a much broader unit than a village community or the community within an urban locus. Agencies for plan implementation must also be co-ordinated both at the village or community level and, more importantly, at a point midway between the community and the national administrative machinery. In other words, the relationship between the village or rural community and the city or urban community must be resolved not in the national plan but in a regional plan if any programme of development at either level is to be effective and relevant to a national objective. This is the case for regional planning and the regional development approach.

What is regional development ?

Regional development is the cumulative effect of interacting development processes influenced or controlled by governmental intervention and by collective and individual decision at the local, intermediate or regional and central levels. These interventions and decisions concern the nature of the administration as well as resources and how they are to be allocated. In other words, regional development involves regional planning.

Regional planning is the study and application of man's economic and social behaviour in space. Simply stated, it is planning for one or more regions inside a country. It analyses the social, political and economic processes in a spatial setting and inquires into the structure of the socio-economic landscape.

^{1/} See E/CN.14/SWSA/7, Youth Employment and National Development in Africa, and Report of the Africa Regional Conference on the Integrated Approach to Rural Development.

Many of the development theories and practices we have hitherto been concerned with, have been based upon "one-point" development problems - the rural community or the city. The same might be said for economic development programmes of the past. The "community development" approach to rural development, for instance, appears to suffer most from its one-dimensionality. In economic planning also, the question of what to produce, how to produce it and for whom to produce, seemed to have been considered or analysed for a world in which the problem of distance, transportation costs, or other factors of space, and social import were not adequately considered.

Regional development policy precedes regional development planning and programming, and consideration of regional economics. A country with a highly centralized administrative framework cannot embark upon regional development unless it adopts or creates some form of regional administrative framework at least for the area or areas under consideration.

A policy for regional development is based upon the following considerations: 1/

1. Economic expansion;
2. improved patterns of human settlement and industrial location;
3. the balancing of population and migration with employment opportunities;
4. the promotion of social progress and the joining of social development with economic development; and
5. the evolution of effective legal, political, organizational, and administrative patterns for carrying out a regional development effort.

Regional development policies have come about in response to a mixture of political, social and economic pressures, and it is not always clear as to which of these has played the most influential role. Regional imbalances in economic opportunities which precipitate political crises, or political crises per se, have often drawn attention to the necessity for the type of planning that seeks to redress such imbalances.

A case for regional development policy cannot be based upon purely economic considerations. The political motivation may sometimes be greater. In Africa, for example it is the political factor that may work most effectively against any consideration of regional development planning; for, here, the need appears to be more for policies that promote national integration than diversification. Economic benefits alone might not be sufficient incentive to offset the real danger of possible regional disaffection and national fragmentation if the regions became too independent or economically viable. Yet, for

1/ Design for a Worldwide Study of Regional Development (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1966); pp. 2-3.

the country as a whole, there is no question of the fact that the regions cannot depend perpetually on the central government and must be self-supporting. There can be unity in diversity from the economic point of view also - especially if such diversity upon which regional planning seems to be based, in fact, does exist.

Types of developmental regions

The United Nations uses the term "region" to refer to the continents, and the designation "Africa Region" is used to differentiate it from the "Asia and Far East Region" or the regions of Europe, Latin America etc. This is not the framework employed here. By region is meant a sub-section of a country or State.^{1/} Several characteristics differentiate different regions within a single country. These are political, economic or geographic. Some regions are defined by natural features such as river basins, agricultural zones or forest districts. There are tribal or ethnic regions, political or administrative regions, or metropolitan regions. The main factors that characterize a region are (1) an awareness of regional problems and opportunities, and (2) an anticipated capacity to do something about them through planning and development activities.^{2/} But these two important factors are not pre-ordained. They can be developed in much the same way as nationhood is capable of development. In Africa, this is very important.

Regional problems in Africa fall mainly upon policy-makers; and this will continue to be so during the period of nation-building and early industrialization when resources are limited and activities are concentrated in one or a few administrative centres. But it is in Africa and the developing countries, that some thought need to be given to the concept of regional planning so that the few centres that exist do not grow so rapidly and out of hand as to create problems for economic expansion and development. These few centres often act as suction pumps, to pull in the more dynamic population elements from the more static regions thereby relegating the remainder of the country to a second-class peripheral point. If this is not checked through consideration of spatial distribution of development resources, the rest of the country will be placed in a quasi-colonial relationship to the capital city or municipality experiencing net outflows of people, capital, and resources, most of which redound to the advantage of the centre where economic growth will tend to be rapid, sustained, and cumulative.

^{1/} A region may also mean a development or geographic area that cuts across national boundaries.

^{2/} Design for a Worldwide Study of Regional Development, p. 4.

Several types or categories of regions have been delimited:^{1/}

1. Single-purpose or limited-purpose region. This region is organized around a specific natural resource and its intensive development. A river basin such as the Nile in the UAR or the Volta in Ghana may be developed mainly for irrigation, electricity and other purposes.
2. Frontier region. When a virgin territory or part of the country calls for development because of population pressures or newly-discovered large-scale natural resources, frontiers contiguous to older developed or populated areas or regions may expand spontaneously or deliberately along a broad front. Regions of this type may be further away from any centres or regions of development and may constitute an enclave in themselves. The Awash area in Ethiopia is an example of this type of region.
3. Depressed region. Segments of a country that show marked tendency to decline and do not respond to normal economic activities might be constituted a region for the purpose of development planning. Such areas are notable for their stagnant economy and social backwardness being often isolated and problematic. Parts of Northern Ghana, Sudan and Niger, for example, fall into this category.
4. Metropolitan region. Metropolitan areas are sometimes called "core regions", or "growth poles" and are large urban centres of commerce, administration and industry that are often planned for, administered and developed separately from the rest of the country. Such a region often involves a city and its surrounding areas of influence. Accra-Tema in Ghana and Lagos in Nigeria are two classic examples in Africa.
5. Political regionalization for economic development. When a country divides all parts of its territory into regions not solely for local government administration but, in addition, for planning and development purposes, then it may be said to fall under this category. Such sub-division of the State may be called regions, States, republics or prefectures in order to conform to well-established legal and administrative organizations. Ghana has embarked upon regionalization of its public service structure; but this is not a genuine case of/or regional development. Nigeria offers a more appropriate case of this approach.

^{1/} See John Friedman and William Alonso, Regional Development and Planning (Cambridge, Mass: The M.I.T. Press, 1964) pp. 3-4, and Design for a Worldwide Study of Regional Development, pp. 4-5.

Regional development programmes have also been classified under types of strategies adopted as follows:^{1/}

1. River and lake basin development, e.g. Awash (Ethiopia), Sebon (Morocco) and Pangani and Wami (Tanzania).
2. Regional development around big infrastructure projects, e.g. Asswan (UAR), Volta (Ghana), Kariba (Rhodesia), Kainji (Nigeria), Tan-Zam Highway (Tanzania and Zambia).
3. Integrated rural development, e.g. Sebon regional development.
4. The use of existing or new administrative regions for regional planning e.g. Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Congo (Brazzaville), Cameroon, Libya, Madagascar.
5. The use of central place and growth pole theories, e.g. studies made for Kenya, Angola.
6. The multi-disciplinary survey approach, e.g. Ethiopia (Agro-Industrial Survey), Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia.

Criteria for the choice of regions

The nature of regions, where they already exist, and the choice in the delimitation of new ones, differ widely between developing countries and developed ones - between transitional and economically advanced countries. No single criteria therefore exists for choosing regions for development. The choice must be made, however, in the light of potential contributions that can be made to the nation's development objectives. Such objectives, especially in the case of African countries, is concerned mainly with economic and social integration. Countries such as Nigeria or Congo (Kinshasa), might find that as nations they are excessively "regionalized" so that their national objective might be primarily the achievement of a common ethos and, then, a closely interdependent national economic system. Development in these and other countries might then be looked upon as a process leading to the progressive internal integration of these national territories. But there is nothing to deprive or to prevent these and the other countries from employing the regional approach to cement the bonds of national unity.

^{1/} See Ralph von Gersdoff, Regional Development Experiences and Prospects - Preliminary Report on Africa, Vol. 1. (Geneva: UNRISD, 1968) pp. 6ff.

Regional development has often been seen in connexion with the incidence of economic growth. However, it is not only concerned with the location of economic activities in response to differential regional attractions, as some economists might lead us to believe.^{1/} For our purpose, that of promoting rural development, we shall require a departure from the strictly economic definition of regional development so relevant for more advanced societies. As an illustration, it is proposed to consider two approaches in "regional development" - one, a reality; the other a projection:

1. Regional development in the UAR - The Asswan High Dam Region^{2/}

Two factors of national significance were decisive for the construction of the Asswan High Dam: (a) control of the Nile River for a fuller use of its waters; and (b) production of electric power for the growing economy of the United Arab Republic. Activities connected with the construction of the Dam, and the many services and institutions required to support this large undertaking have created new and highly favourable conditions for the development of the Southern third of Egypt. The power produced by the High Dam has enhanced the use of already known but dormant resources, and new resources for agricultural and industrial development are already beginning to yield results.

As a result of the construction of the Dam, a vast body of water (Lake Nasser) as well as a large irrigated agricultural area in the desert, the desert area of the Dam, have not only endowed the Asswan region with better physical conditions and a better climate but the generous provision of social services and facilities together with the excellent supply channels organized for the thirty thousand builders and their families, which are also benefiting the growing population of the region. These constituted a new set of development factors whose significance, in time, came to overshadow the initial limited objectives of the High Dam. This was true not only for Asswan but also for the UAR national development strategy.

Until the advent of the High Dam the city of Asswan had remained initially unchanged for generations. Its population of some 30,000 made it the supply centre for the river and desert people in the surrounding areas. The construction of the High Dam sparked a growth in population to 120,000 in 1966. Known resources have been re-discovered and new resources have been assessed as a source of economic wealth for the UAR. An additional 500,000 acres of cultivable land was planned to be added to Egypt's total of 6 million with the water from Lake Nasser as a basis for extensive food growing and processing.

^{1/} See Friedman and Alonso, op cit, p. 20.

^{2/} From the UN Preparatory Team on Research and Training in Regional Development Report on Asswan, 1966.

Deposits of iron ore, phosphate, clay, copper and other minerals appeared to exist in sufficient quantity for a chemical-metals industrial complex. New industries requiring a large power supply (iron reduction and aluminium for instance) also seemed feasible as a basis for secondary supporting industries and services.

To maximize the emerging development possibilities, a research and planning agency was established in 1963 by the Government of the UAR to guide the development of the Asswan Region: the "Asswan Regional Planning Project". The Presidential Decree No. 445 - 1966 establishing the Regional Planning of the Asswan Project defined its objectives as follows:

1. To study economic and social conditions in the region and carry out the necessary surveys in the areas;
2. To make recommendations concerning development trends and outline related social changes translating them into specific programmes;
3. To include in these programmes the establishment of required research laboratories and experimental projects;
4. To organize together with the developing services technical and scientific training programmes in the region;
5. To recommend in the light of studies and research carried out priorities in the execution of specific programmes and projects.

Policy guidance for planning and development was vested in a committee chaired by the Governor of Asswan (who also had the status of a Minister in connexion with the affairs of the dam project). The committee was composed of the following members: General Administrator of Local Administration; the Under-Secretaries of Treasury, Agriculture, Education, Health, Planning, and Social Affairs; the Director of the General Authority of Industrialization; the Chairman of the Desert Development Organization; the Chairman of the Aquatic Resources Organization; the Director-General of Regional Planning of Asswan; and a Secretary General. The committee's functions included general policy formulation; reporting on all aspects of planning and development in the Asswan region; projects requiring financial approval by the Prime Minister; and contracts with other authorities for research and training operations in connexion with the project.

The "Asswan Regional Planning Project" Agency worked in close association with the Ministry of Planning and under the direction of a board composed of under-secretaries of the relevant ministries, chaired by the Governor of Asswan. A comprehensive survey of existing research data on the human, agricultural, mineral and water resources of the region, among others, had been prepared, collated and evaluated in 1964 by a 10-day conference which was attended by 150 officials and experts from the UAR and abroad. The conference suggested the desirable course of action for each of the different sectors of development and recommended ways of their integration within a comprehensive regional plan. These recommendations became the general framework for the programme of the Asswan Regional Planning Project.

The Asswan Regional Planning Agency in 1966 consisted of five research and development centres: the Agricultural Development Centre, the Industrial Development Centre, the Mineral Centre, the Water Resources Centre, and the Human Resources Development Centre. Each centre surveyed, catalogued and evaluated resource potentials for its sector, analysed existing conditions, methods and procedures, and projects envisaged for the use of resources holding the greatest productive promise. The centres for agriculture, industry, minerals and water, formulated projects up to the "proposal" level, at which point such projects were vetted and checked against other demands for finance, manpower requirements and all other resources that might be in limited supply. The Human Resources Development Centre operated as a "research and service facility" to ensure that sufficient professional, technical, skilled and general manpower would be available at the times required. It was also responsible for the planning of general health, educational, social and community services and facilities for the Asswan Region.

Two additional "research and service centres", the Transportation Development Centre and the Environmental Development Centre, supported the five centres by facilitating integration of sectoral development at the regional level. The former planned the expansion of requisite water, rail, road and air transportation networks and the latter planned for the rebuilding of cities, towns and villages in the region, for the improvement of housing and residential amenities, and for an adequate distribution of power utilities and other infrastructural services and facilities in order to make the region a more attractive place to live in and a more efficient physical environment for economic growth.

The relationship between the central and the regional Governments and between national planning and regional development in the UAR have been guided by the recognition that regional activity should be intimately geared to national planning, that development plans originating at the regional level can be pre-vetted for economic feasibility in terms of actual local resources, human and infrastructural; that regional development facilitates the identification and use of local resources which may otherwise remain dormant, thus often lowering the need for external inputs, that the ultimate social benefits which the population of the region would derive from such plans can be projected in terms of measurable, concrete and not too distant targets; that by this measure the average citizen can be involved more directly in the development process; and that the allocation of national resources for the implementation of regional development projects is a responsibility of central ministries whose total sectoral allocations, in turn, are established within the framework of the national plan.

To make sure that the activities of the seven development centres were closely aligned with the national sectoral plans and policies of the corresponding ministries, "Strategy Boards" were established for each centre. Each centre was linked on the one hand with the regional plan, and on the other hand with the ministry which was to implement or to facilitate implementation of the respective sectoral plans in the Asswan Region. These boards included

at least four members: two from the Regional Planning for Asswan Project and two from the ministry concerned. Each board directed the corresponding centre's policy and approved individual projects for implementation. Approval and support at both the local and national level could thus be assured in advance. This device also ensured that the overall development plan of a ministry would be furthered at the regional level through sectoral development; that the necessary finance for such regional development would be forthcoming; and that implementation would be adequately supervised by the Centre whose research and planning had led to a specific development activity.

Here is an example of how the Asswan Regional Planning Project and the national ministries co-operated. Research of the Agricultural Development Centre may have indicated that a profitable up-grading of the local dairy cattle is possible. Consequently, the Centre proposes action for the Board's approval. The project is then discussed with the Department of Agriculture of the Asswan Governorate (an arm of the Ministry of Agriculture) since they are to furnish experimental animals, sheds, labourers, etc. Their field staff may also test the proposal with the co-operation of a few carefully selected farmers in the area to enroll their support and co-operation before the project is launched on a full scale. Thus, planning become practical and directly linked to implementation. A second advantage of this organizational device is that it combined planning and executive functions and the people concerned into a co-operative relationship with joint responsibility for success.

It was clear, even in 1966 when the United Nations mission visited the Asswan regional development project ¹ that the regional development approach was proving highly successful to the extent that it was unbalancing the local government structure and the national development effort in the UAR. The project itself was initiated as an "experiment" or as a pilot project. But there was no indication then, or since that lessons learned in connexion with Asswan would find expression in other regions of the country. This, in fact, appears to be the pitfall of all "pilot projects". For, however much they prove their worth, they seldom get transferred elsewhere or become generally adopted. The Tennessee Valley Authority in America has been a showpiece of regional development and multi-agency co-operation ever since it was established, and yet this has never been duplicated in America. Throughout the world, in India, Chile, Brazil, Japan, etc., we have examples of lone "pilot projects" which, whether successful or not, become ends in themselves rather than means toward the expansion of the programme elsewhere.

¹/ The author was one of a team of four United Nations personnel who visited the UAR and the Asswan Project from 10-24 October, 1966.

There is no doubt, however, that the Asswan Regional Development project has much in it to commend itself to other countries of Africa who can see in it much that can be adopted or adapted for rural development. For this purpose the present "local government" administration of Ghana is discussed as a possible framework for rural development within the context of regional development planning.

2. The Regional approach to rural development in Ghana^{1/}

Ghana has, since before independence, had a centrally directed administrative and civil service machinery with some regional administration and autonomy. There are nine "regions" - eight regions and the Greater Accra District. These regions had been established mostly for administration or regional and local government and not primarily for development. Government departments and auxiliary services are headquartered in Accra, the capital, with limited authority given to the regional heads of department. The Regional Commissioners had been in administrative charge of the regions and had acted as representatives of the Central Government there.

The pattern of local government organization in Ghana is based upon the Local Government Act, 1961. This Act provided for the division of the whole country into administrative areas administered by city, municipal, urban, or local councils. These local authorities operated within the framework of the eight regions and the Accra District under the Regional Commissioners who had the status of a minister. The local authorities never possessed the power to determine the character and scope of their functions, and certain of the local government functions are delegated by the Minister of Justice - who had been responsible to the President on local government affairs.^{2/} The 1969 Constitution recognized the existing regions and made provision for mergers when necessary. It also makes provision for local Councils, District Councils and Regional Councils all for local government administration.^{3/}

The inherent weakness of a centralized system of administration for purposes of development were made clear in a recent report by a Commission established in Ghana by the Government which said ^{4/}

^{1/} Since Ghana is the venue for the Sub-regional Meeting on the Development of Rural Life and Institutions for which this paper is prepared, this example affords participants an opportunity for more detailed investigation on the spot.

^{2/} See J.K. Nsarkch, Local Government in Ghana (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1964).

^{3/} Government of Ghana, Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, Accra, 1969, paragraphs 156-161.

^{4/} Government of Ghana, Report of the Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana, Accra, 1967.

"One of the major weaknesses from the point of view of efficiency and programme achievement in the present organization of the Machinery of Government is the excessive centralization of authority and responsibility in the ministries in Accra. We have been informed that there are 36 officers of Principal Secretary rank in Accra. On the other hand, most of the Districts we have visited are in the charge of inexperienced cadets. The same trend appears in many of the professional and technical departments; for example, in one region we were told that there is one civil engineer of two years experience in the whole region ..."

"... over the years, ministries appear to have become more and more directly involved in the management of programmes to the neglect of their role as instruments for determining objectives, priorities and strategies for the nation as a whole, and for assessing, marshalling and allocating resources..."

"... there have been other disadvantages to the nation from the past trend to excessive centralization. In particular, it is strikingly obvious that development in Accra is quite disproportionate to what has taken place in other parts of the country. The rural areas in particular appear not to have had a fair share of amenities and employment opportunities." ^{1/}

The Commission's recommendation included the following:^{2/}

1. "In consideration of all these aspects, we have come to the conclusion that in order to improve efficiency and economy and to provide a machinery of Government better designed to accomplish programmes for rapid, social and economic development, there needs to be a radical decentralization of responsibility for the management of public affairs" (para. 29).
2. "We have come to the conclusion that the basic administrative and executive institutions for the provision of these governmental services which are carried out at local levels should (with a few exceptions) be a District Authority." (para. 31). "There should, in our view, be a clear unambiguous distinction between the deliberative functions of the council and the professional and executive functions of management" (para. 39).
3. "We recommend that there should be established between the District Authority and the Central Government a Regional Authority. This would be primarily a planning and co-ordinating body. It would be professionally staffed (including a development economist and physical planner as well as engineers, accountants, etc.) and would be responsible for assessing the development possibilities of the Region in relation to each governmental activity and would integrate these activities into co-ordinated programmes within the National Development Plan." (para. 44).

^{1/} Ibid, pp. 2-3.

^{2/} Ibid, pp. 4 ff.

4. "Each Regional Authority should have a Council which would be a consultative and deliberative body. We suggest that it should consist of the Regional Administrative Officer as Chairman and the most Senior-ranking representatives of each major ministry operating in the Region together with two representatives of each District Authority in the Region to represent territorial as well as functional interests" (para. 48).

The Government, in a White Paper^{1/} accepted the major recommendations of the Commission (including the above) and is currently proceeding with their implementation.

The importance of the Commission's report for an appraisal of the regional administration approach to development is to be found in the fact that the Commissioners insist that excessive centralization is "detrimental to rapid social and economic development", and the fact that the Government speedily accepted the policy of decentralization and is attempting to strengthen regional administration in Ghana.

It has been stressed earlier that regional development of any kind presupposes the existence, or the acceptance, of the philosophy or framework of regional administration in some form for the "region" concerned. Yet, economists and social scientists have failed to stress the necessity of strong, stable and efficient administrative machinery for development purposes. This is true both of "pilot projects" and development projects as well as rural and urban development projects. The concern seems to be wholly with the direction of planning techniques and mobilization of financial, technical and manpower resources that deal directly with plan implementation. The administrative framework at the regional and local government levels appear to be equally important. Ghana's case goes a long way to stress the need for such emphasis.

Ghana has had three principal development plans covering five and seven-year periods. Like other African countries these plans have had relevance mainly for national projects. They have related to planning for industrialization, increase in agricultural output, electrification, etc. The gross national product has been rising. But life in the rural communities appears to remain the same and, in some respects, getting more difficult. All this is in spite of years of experience with community development, co-operative and agricultural extension programmes. Even though these development plans attempted to utilize Regional Planning Committees, the efforts of these Committees were relevant mostly for the national programme and not for the development of the respective regions. Regional Planning Committees can contribute much to national development planning and plans; but they are not a substitute for regional planning or its machinery. They are mostly advisory and have no executive function and, in the case of the previous Committees, largely political.

^{1/} White Paper on the Report of the Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana, Accra, 1968. See para. 9 p. 3.

Recommendations of the Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana go to some extent in encouraging regionalization of the public service and the local government system in Ghana. Under these proposals, and with the revival of the Regional Planning Committees, Ghana still would not have embarked upon a nation-wide programme of "regional development" as we have defined it here. The educational system, for example, would continue to be nation-wide, not adapted to the special needs of the regions, and with little or nothing to promote regional awareness and aspirations. There would be little or nothing in the educational system (which could be achieved through regional textbook production) that promotes regional pride and encourages school-leavers to remain in their respective regions even if not in their particular rural communities. Outlets for commercial and other enterprises would continue to be sought through Accra, the capital; and development of other centres such as Cape Coast and Takoradi would not be pursued with the urgency which they demand. Problems of farmers in the different regions would continue to increase because marketing boards are centred away from where the problems are, and individual farmers will continue to have little influence over policy and planning decisions that affect them. In this atmosphere, to talk of rural development is to be less than candid and to mock the farmer.

The regional development approach is not to be considered a panacea for all the problems that afflict the rural sector and rural development. And yet, from a rational point of view, it seems to deserve consideration as possibly one of the most effective means of approaching a solution to planning and administration problems and in encouraging efficient use of resources. If rural development is not to mean the perpetuation of the farmer's miserable condition, then a more realistic way of introducing efficiency into farming, of establishing an administrative framework closer to the farmer and over which he could exercise some control, of promoting an educational and commercial infrastructure that relates to the peculiar problems and aspirations of regional farmers and others, should be promoted. All this means, perhaps, that the present stage of development in developing countries - especially in respect to rural communities - calls for bold programmes for development in which the rural farmer can effectively participate. To talk of "popular participation" in other than both economic and political terms is to be unrealistic.

Ghana has therefore taken a most important step in its attitude in favour of strong regional administration. In a recent speech,^{1/} the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning indicated that the Government is ready to revive the Regional Planning Committees that existed in the past, in connexion with preparation of the next five-year development plan:

^{1/} Reported in the Daily Graphic, Accra, June 19, 1970.

1. to develop the natural and human resources;
2. to identify major opportunities for new agricultural and industrial development and of bottlenecks in the expansion of existing agricultural and industrial activities;
3. to co-ordinate the development programmes of the different Government agencies at the regional and local levels in order to make them harmonious and consistent with each other;
4. to promote local aspects of major elements of national economic policy, and
5. to implement the National Development Plan and Budget on the ground.

All these point to a need for some form of regional development or the regional development approach.

Regional administration and regional development

In Asswan, in order to take advantage of facilities made available through construction of the High Dam and associated facilities, and in order to develop the essentially rural area in which the Dam is located, the existing regional administration had to be strengthened. The result was the Asswan Regional Development Authority which has already been described. In Ghana, a similar dam has been built - the Akosombo Dam on the Volta. A Volta River Authority has been established as a consequence of this dam. But, unlike Asswan, this Authority is not for "development". Its main purposes appear to be to resettle farmers displaced by the rising waters of the Volta as a result of construction of the dam, and the distribution and sale of electricity.

The Volta River Authority, unlike the Asswan Regional Development Authority, is situated in Accra and away from the dam site. The building of the Akosombo hydro-electric power and dam complex, and the creation of the biggest man-made lake in the world, has not produced any master plan for the Accra region, the Volta region or the geographic area of the dam. It is doubtful whether the resettlement scheme has been very successful. Food production in this area has not increased, electricity is unavailable in surrounding villages of the dam site, and the farmers are as poor as they were before the dam was built. Yet the dam site and the flooded areas belonged to the people who have been re-located or who live in the vicinity. Some form of regional development plan could have been initiated in connexion with such tremendous potential as that offered by the Volta Dam.

Table 1 : Statistical analysis of nine regions in Ghana

Region	Capital	Area in Sq. Miles	Population of Reg. 1960 ^{1/}	Pop. of Reg. ^{1/} Capital 1960 ^{1/}	No. of Indust. Estab. 1964	Persons employed in industry 1964	Value of gross output of indust. 1964
Upper	Bolgatanga	10,548	757,000	5,515	1	51	10
Northern	Tamale	27,175	532,000	40,440	4	376	132
Brong Ahafo	Sunyani	15,273	588,000	15,813	8	2,341	1,585
Ashanti	Kumasi	9,417	1,109,000	180,642	47	15,536	15,435
Western	Sekondi	9,236	626,000	75,450	35	26,043	24,806
Central	Cape Coast	3,815	751,000	41,230	12	1,877	1,420
Eastern	Koforidua	7,698	1,094,000	34,000	19	5,495	5,536
Volta	Ho	7,943	777,000	17,000	3	151	57
Greater Accra Dist.	Accra	995	492,000	333,828	94	14,062	31,412
TOTAL		92,100	6,727,000	743,918	223	65,932	80,393

Source: Ghana Government, Economic Survey, 1964.

^{1/} The 1970 Census of Population figures are not available. Revised estimated figures by Bureau of Statistics showed following increases in 1966: Ghana - 7,945,000; Accra - 522,000; Kumasi - 249,000; Sekondi - 111,000.

A planned programme of development for the resources of each region of Ghana would demand that each of the eight or nine regions be so organized that (taking the example of Asswan project further), each region would undertake an assessment of its resources and other potentialities and prosecute a policy and programme of development - especially rural development - consistent with their respective potentials, and within the framework of targets set by a national plan.

Ghana is a good case study in possibilities for the development of regional administration and planning for several reasons:

1. Ghana has a tradition of regional administration in its eight (nine) regions;
2. Most of the regions cut across tribal lines which is a positive feature for national integration;
3. The country is sufficiently large and each region large enough to sustain development planning and implementation;^{1/}
4. Each region is endowed with growth centres or growth poles, and development potentials; and most of these are centrally located or easily accessible;^{2/}
5. Each region has sufficiently developed infrastructure in the way of trunk and feeder roads, educational, legal and political institutions.

Ghana is fortunate in having a large civil service and competent civil servants who can be seconded to the regional administrations to assist with plans and implementation of development programmes. A research and training programme in regional administration could easily be developed at the Institute of Administration in Accra. The close proximity of this Institute to the University of Ghana offers it added potential.

A regional development programme might find direction under the Minister of Social Development or under a Ministry of Regional Development which does not exist.

^{1/} Not all countries are large enough to carry out meaningful programme of regionalization. The Gambia, for example, may be too small to divide it into regions for the purpose of development.

^{2/} See Table 1.

Summary and conclusions

Within the limited scope of this paper, we have concerned ourselves with regional development as one of the means of effectively developing African rural communities. Not all countries in Africa can effectively adopt the regional development approach even from purely economic motives. There is the size of countries to contend with. Added to this is the need to ensure that proposed regions have enough physical, economic, manpower and other resources or infrastructure to promote development. Some of these criteria have been presented. A greater understanding of the concept and techniques of regional development is possible through further reading.

In effect, we have said that African countries need to familiarize themselves with, and to appreciate a little more, the regional planning approach to development of their rural communities. At present, due to over-centralization of planning and development effort at the central administrative headquarters - usually the capital - little real development of rural communities take place. Not only is there the need to establish a link between national and local priorities through the intermediary of a regional administrative and planning machinery, there is also the need to see rural development as inseparably tied up with urban development both of which must be planned for at the same time.

If growth centres could be developed at the regional level, rural-urban migration will be substituted for the current wave of rural exodus that characterizes the productive sector of the rural population. Regional centres would, at least, take the pressure off the capitals.

Regional development and regional political administration, or regional local government, go hand-in-hand. Where such decentralization would present a real threat to national integration, such an approach might be politically unwise and should be used with caution. Decentralization, where a country is sufficiently large, is necessary in any event. The skilful use of diverse groups and resources within a country can promote unity, if a way could be found to promote it.

In the Asswan region of the UAR we have presented a case of the successful application of the regional development concept to the development of the rural communities there. This was achieved through a combination of factors: good leadership, central government support, strengthening of the local or regional administration for development, availability of funds, and the creation of the regional development authority with a strong research emphasis. In Ghana, conditions are favourable for regional planning and development although the country is still administratively over-centralized and further regionalization is urged. The Asswan project is in respect of only one region, and it centres around the Asswan High Dam. In Ghana we have proposed a different kind of regionalization: one for the whole country although, like the UAR, it is endowed with an electrification dam.

Regional development in the UAR benefits the rural areas of the Asswan region alone. There is no reason why other rural communities in the UAR should not benefit from regional development also. This is seen as possible in our approach to Ghana; not through a "pilot project" involving the Volta River Authority or a single region in the country but through development of all eight or nine regions simultaneously or successively.