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REPORT ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

1. The aim of the Commission in this field has been to promote and stimulate statistical development in all African countries and territories so that economic and social problems and programmes could be handled with fuller quantitative knowledge. The activities of the secretariat in this respect have been based on the recommendations of the Conference of African Statisticians as approved by the Commission at its annual sessions. They have continued to flow along the four main lines of training staff, carrying out methodological research aimed at the formulation of statistical standards adapted to African conditions, rendering direct assistance to governments at their request in specific fields and enhancing the exchange of experiences and the diffusion of statistical information in the Region.
2. Details on recent developments in statistical training activities and the performance during the last year at the statistical training centres sponsored and/or assisted by the United Nations, at Achimota, Addis Ababa, Yaounde, Abidjan and Rabat are included in Commission document E/CN.14/307 submitted to the session, and therefore will not be covered here.
3. A principal trend in our activities has been a gradual shift from the initial effort to encourage basic statistical organization at the national level to more detailed research and consideration of methodological improvements.
4. Preparation of an extensive working document on technical and practical aspects of developing statistical programmes on a comprehensive

basis under African conditions has been completed. The paper brought together experience gained in the countries as well as ideas and methods arising from advisory activities and aimed at relating statistical production to planning requirements. It is scheduled for consideration by a working group of statisticians and planners early in 1965 and an intensive summary of its recommendations has already been submitted to the First Conference of African Planners. (E/CN.14/CAS.3/3 Rev.1).

5. In the field of population and demographic statistics negotiations have been proceeding with the United Nations Statistical Office for working out details of the African part of the 1970 world census programme. A revised and expanded report on African population census methods and problems has been issued and circulated to governments as document E/CN.14/CAS.3/3 Rev.1). A first draft on housing sample surveys and census practices in Africa has been prepared at the request of the Statistical Office. Draft studies in methodology relating to problems of enumerating nomads, coverage of economic and social characteristics of population in censuses and migration statistics have been prepared for submission to the Fourth Conference of African Statisticians and eventual use in the 1970 census round.

6. A seminar on vital statistics in Africa was convened in Addis Ababa from 14 to 19 December 1964. Documentation was prepared by the Statistics Division in co-operation with the Demographic Section and three Consultants. The report of the group is circulated to the session, and will be considered by the Conference of African Statisticians later this year.

7. A study on population growth and manpower trends in selected African countries has been completed in co-operation with the Demographic Section. This was undertaken at the request of the organizing committee of the United Nations 1965 World Population Conference for submission to the Conference which meets in September 1965.

8. The first African Seminar on Labour Statistics was convened in Addis Ababa from 3 to 12 November 1964 as a Joint ECA/ILO project.

Preparation of working papers was shared by the two secretariats. The Report of the Seminar has been circulated to the session (Document E/CN.14/CAS.4/LS/15) and will be submitted to the Fourth Conference of African Statisticians for consideration.

9. Research in the field of National Accounts continued to occupy a major part of the secretariat's attention. The editing of the report of the Working Group on the Adaption of the United Nations System of National Accounts, requested by the 3rd CAS, was completed, (E/CN.14/221 Rev.1), and circulated to governments together with a note on the discussion of the intermediate system at the Conference.

10. Considerable work was completed in the preparation of the voluminous draft Handbook on National Accounts in Africa which contains the results of experimentation with the intermediate system in nine African countries. This draft together with a secretariat working paper and other documentation were considered by a group of experts convened in Addis Ababa from 9 to 16 December 1964. The report of the group has been circulated to the session, and will be referred to the 4th CAS for study.

11. Direct assistance to governments is handled by the Commission's Regional Statistical Advisers and, in a small measure, by staff members within the limitations of time and travel funds availability. During its fourth year of operation, the regional advisory system has gained more recognition, and has been faced with many more requests than could be handled by the present strength.

12. More than twenty missions have been conducted in a dozen countries during the past year. The fields covered were national accounts, public sector analysis, sample survey work, demographic statistics and statistical programming. The lengths of assignments have varied considerably with the subjects and types of help required. In national accounts and public accounts assistance involved practical project work and therefore became relatively more time consuming. On the other hand it has been possible to give technical advice on field surveys and demographic statistics requirements more rapidly.

13. Two major projects of exchange of experiences were implemented during the year. A meeting of heads of West African Statistical Offices was held in Niamey from 19 to 23 October 1964. Three specific items were on its Agenda. Its report (E/CN.14/CAS.4/STAT/5) has been circulated to the session and will be referred to the 4th CAS together with a report on a similar meeting for North and East Africa to be held this year. The Study Tour on the relation of statistics to planning, organized jointly with ECE, was conducted in Ghana, Tunisia, UAR, USSR and France from 20 August to 2 October 1964. Eleven African statisticians participated. A full report containing notes on lectures delivered and discussions thereon is under preparation and will be published later this year.

14. The publication of the Statistical Newsletter as a medium for spreading information relating to statistical work in the region has continued in spite of a temporary setback caused by changes in editorial staff, which affected its periodicity. A new emphasis is now laid on introducing comment on technical problems in addition to the straight reporting on meetings and other current activities.

15. New volumes in the two series issued by the Commission on African trade were produced. Series A gives the direction of trade and Series B a detailed cross classification of imports and exports by commodity groups and countries of origin or destination. In addition, a number of basic statistical series have been brought up-to-date, including (a) volume and unit value indexes for individual countries and for sub-regions; (b) imports by end-use at current and constant prices and (c) pattern of imports and exports of some African countries. In addition, the Statistical annex to the Economic Bulletin for Africa has been brought up-to-date.

16. Compilation of data on African industrial statistics progressed during the year. It culminated in the preparation of a first draft of an annual bulletin containing back series data on the production of agricultural, mining and manufacturing commodities in Africa as well as a draft for a current quarterly bulletin. It is hoped that both efforts

would be finalized early this year. In addition, work on the establishment of basic series on African energy statistics has been started.

17. Data has also been compiled on government accounts of more than thirty African countries in an effort to establish basic series in this field of public finance statistics; and material has been collected on distribution statistics in preparation for a seminar on this subject proposed for this year. Furthermore, work on the compilation of social statistics has been taken up. A number of basic series are being established and extensive co-operation with the Social Affairs Section has taken place.

18. In the field of data processing, the mechanical unit has continued its considerable work required for the publication of our Trade Statistics Bulletins and the temporary processing of the Ethiopian external trade statistics. It also undertook several other assignments which included work for the TB Centre of the WHO in Ethiopia, the geographical observatory in Addis Ababa, the Service de la Statistique of the Congo, Brazzaville, and the regular preparation of the ECA payroll.

19. Finally, two more functions performed by the secretariat should be mentioned. Staff members of the Statistics Division have continued their contribution of short courses at our Statistical Training Centre in Addis Ababa; and active participation in the technical assistance country programmes has been maintained through briefing of and correspondence with experts in the field.

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