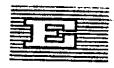
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REVIEW OF WORK IN ECONOMIC STATISTICS

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I. Introduction

1. Since the last report to the Statistics Committee of the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers (PSD) in March, 1982 work has continued in the General Economic Statistics Section (GESS) of the ECA Statistics Division under the following headings: i. national accounts, finance and price statistics, ii, industrial statistics, iii. agriculture, transport and communications and tourism statistics. Work on external trade statistics is done in the International Trade and Related Statistics Section, in the division.

IT. National Accounts

- 2. Advisory services to ECA Member States on national accounts have been maintained since the last report on activities in this area to this Committee. Since April 1982 missions have been undertaken to 12 countries to examine the state of the national accounts work, to suggest improvements in the scope, reliability and timeliness of the estimates and in some cases to assist in their compilation. Of late, the emphasis during the missions has shifted from ad-hoc compilation of estimates to assistance in national capability building.
- 3. From follow-up missions and feed-backs, it is gratifying to record that many of the recommendations and suggestions for improvements made during these missions have in the majority of cases been incorporated into the accounts. However, it should be noted that in a number of cases serious gaps still exist in the basic data available for compiling the estimates and that improvements in the statistical data collection system are clearly called for. Some of the parameters used in the estimation are now out-of-data and do not adequately reflect the current economic situations in the countries.
- 4. Nevertheless, the need for reliable and comparable national accounts series at the country, sub-regional and regional levels has never been more passing. Consequently, the work of the secretariat in preparing estimates of gross domestic product and related aggregates for all African countries has continued, and every effort is being made to closely associate this work with the regional advisory services on national accounts.
- 5. In spite of this, the work has not been without difficulties. By far the most important problem has been the non-availability in the secretariat of indicators of current economic perfermance of countries. Special efforts by the secretariat to collect this information through a short questionnaire sent out early each year and also the circulation to Member States of the secretariat's preliminary estimates of major national accounts aggregates in the first quarter of each year have not generated sufficient response from countries.
- 6. The need for the secretariat's work on country and regional estimates is further strengthened by the fact that a general time lag of about two years exists for most countries of the region in the availability of official national accounts data. But the work on monitoring and assessing economic progress and performance of African countries, providing factual information as a basis for the formulation of intra-African projects of regional and sub-regional co-operation and economic integration cannot wait. In the absence of timely data, good preliminary estimates must be used.

- 7. It is appreciated that part of the reason for the time lag in official national accounts statistics is the lack of basic data, inadequate trained staff and other resources. It is to be hoped that the National Accounts Capability Programme (NACP), more about which will be said later in this report, will adequately address these issues.
- 8. The national accounts project under which ECA had been giving advisory services and on-the-job training to a number of countries in the region during the past several years has been maintained during the period. It will be recalled that the United Nations Development Programme had allocated a sum of US\$ 350 000 to the project (RAF/78/061) to give increased assistance to African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Newly Independent Countries (NICs) which are at an early stage of statistical development to develop a coherent set of economic and national accounts statistics for use in planning and monitoring economic development, and in the training of national staff. Work under the project which started in April 1979 will continue until the available funds are exhausted. Because of the drastic cuts in UNDP financial resources the project has not been included in the UNDP third programming cycle 1982-1986.
- 9. Because of the great importance the ECA and the Conference of African Flanners, Statisticians and Democraphers attached to this aspect of regional advisory services, the ECA has retained the services of the Chief Technical Adviser, National Accounts.
- 10. In addition, when the first signs of a possible discontinuation of UNDP funding for the project were received, the ECA started to give serious consideration to other possible ways of continuing the project activities. As delegates to the Statistics Cormittee session of the Second Joint Conference will remember, one possibility which ECA discussed at that session was the establishment of a National Accounts Capability Programme (NACP) which might attract bilateral assistance, include a stronger training element and aim at the establishment of more permanent and effective national accounts units as an integral and co-ordinated part of African statistical services.
- 11. Fortunately, what appeared as a possibility in April 1982 is now a reality. The NACP has been launched. It is essentially a programme to build up the capability of developing African countries, including the LDCs and NICs, in the field of national accounts statistics. The programme should help to overcome the unfortunate situation in some countries where work on national accounts has been carried cut as isolated compilation exercises contributing little to the generation of basic data flows and policy formulation.
- 12. The programme aims at capability building as opposed to ad-hoc technical assistance operations and at ensuring a proper place for national accounts in the integrated statistical systems being developed by African countries. The achievement of this objective should, it is hoped, enable national accounts to perform three continuing functions: (1) Providing a guideline for generating well-balanced flows of data from the subject divisions of the statistical services and its field survey organizations, (2) serving as a tool for

integrating and analysing economic data for the formulation of short and long-term policies with regard to general strategy and specific projects and (3) providing a means of progressing towards more elaborate analytical arrangements. The NACP along with the on-going National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and other programmes for the improvement and development of basic statistics and training etc. would result in the development of integrated systems of national statistics serving the needs of African countries.

- 13. Although NACP was launched in December 1982 the full financial and staff resources which will be needed for the complete implementation of the programme are still being sought. These include principally a chief technical adviser, a second specialist, consultants, and funding for mission travel, training, seminars and fellowships. The Chief Technical Adviser is on board and funds for his services and operations are being provided for under ECA's regular budget. Unfortunately, ECA's own resources are limited and it has therefore been found necessary to seek outside financial and other resources for the programme.
- 14. Discussions in this regard have been held with the Government of the Republic of France and the World Bank. For its part the French Government has agreed in principle to provide a French-speaking expert for NACP on the understanding that ECA will have to find funds for mission travel. However, our latest information is that that Government is experiencing difficulties in identifying a suitable candidate for the post and the ECA is taking follow-up action on the matter.
- 15. Following a mission to the World Bank undertaken by the Chief, Statistics Division, ECA, in March 1983 to discuss NACP, the Bank has proposed the following programme of assistance: (1) provision of two national accounts experts to be posted at the Bank's resident mission in Addis Ababa, to work on the NACP in close collaboration with ECA Statistics Division (2) organization of Bank-NACP joint missions to countries participating in NACP; (3) provision of fellowships and travel funds for participants in training sewinars on national accounts and basic statistics from existing Bank technical assistance projects. At the time of writing this review, an approach paper on African statistical development, incorporating the strategy of the Bank's involvement in NACP was under preparation by the Bank. This paper along with the Bank's proposals on NACP will then be submitted to the Senior Management of the Bank for consideration.
- 16. On its side, the ECA Statistics Division is adding a new dimension to the work programme of GESS within the division. This involves the increased mobilization of the manpower resources available in GESS towards the implementation of NACP. To the extent that travel funds permit, staff of GESS will be undertaking advisory missions to countries participating in NACP with the objectives of assisting the units/sections with responsibility for the development of economic statistics with the preparation of work programmes, staff training, data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of basic statistics needed for secondary data systems like the national accounts and other applications. As envisaged, this involvement of GESS should require little or no chance in existing projects but these will have to be fully co-ordinated in the context of specific efforts to assist African countries without losing sight

of the supporting data base and appropriate methodological research activities of GESS. Undoubtedly, all these will have implications for the workload of ECA Statistics Division.

17. Considering the fact that only the Chief Technical Adviser under NACP is on board, invitations have been issued in the first instance to the following countries viz. Ethiopia, Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Marbia and (Zanzibar) United Republic of Tanzania, to indicate their interest in NACP activities. Five of these countries viz. Cambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Zambia, and (Zanzibar) United Republic of Tanzania have already indicated that they would like to participate in the programme. Missions have been mounted to all of these countries except Zambia which sought participation in the programme commencing mid 1984. In addition, advisory missions have been undertaken to the Comoros and Djibouti by regular staff of the division.

Progress in the implementation of MACP

- During missions to each NACP country, an assessment is first made of the existing situation relating to work on compilation of national accounts and the availability of basic data. The concepts and methods of estimation adopted are examined and suggestions for improvement of the reliability and scope of the series made. Conceptual and methodological issues involved are discussed in detail. Ltentative programme or list of items of work that should be taken up in the immediate future are discussed. The surveys and ad-hoc enquiries for filling the gaps and for augmenting the available data are indicated. The emphasis during all the missions has been mainly to assist in clarifying conceptual and methodological problems confronting the national accounts section and to indicate necessary further steps. Once some progress has been made the countries can request further follow-up missions. The participating countries should thus be able gradually to improve their know-how and expertise in the field, leading to more useful and dependable statistics, which is the primary objective of NACP. The success of the programme depends on the commitment of individual countries in drawing up a suitable work programme and more so on the commitment to take sustained action in implementing the agreed work programme.
 - 19. Unfortunately, the NACP does not have as yet any funds to augment the resources available with member States for conducting censuses or sample surveys. Ho training workshops or seminars are being planned in the immediate future for lack of funds. With the expected active participation of the World Bank in the implementation of NACP it should be possible to organize a training seminar in 1984 and possibly every year thereafter.
 - 20. As mentioned earlier, missions under MACP have been arranged so far (January to June 1983) to Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia and (Zanzibar) United Republic of Tanzania. At the end of each mission a detailed report on the major suggestions for improvement has been made and the tentative work programme discussed. Copies of the reports were submitted to the respective governments and the concerned agencies.
 - 21. Unfortunately, it has not so far been possible to assist any French-speaking member States under NACP as efforts are still continuing to obtain the necessary funds and identify a suitable French-speaking candidate for the post.

Price Statistics

- 22. Work on the development of a co-ordinated system of African price statistics at producer, wholesale, export levels etc. is progressing in collaboration with the UN Statistical Office. Inputs into this work have been the price data from African countries plus more detailed information on selected primary commodities.
- 23. Copies of the revised African programme on price statistics with suggested priorities as endorsed by the Second Session of PSD in March 1962 and subsequently approved by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its eighth meeting in Tripoli in April 1982 for implementation by member States as commensurate with their individual needs were sent to all African countries in May 1982. This was followed by an inquiry on progress in the development of price statistics in the light of priorities suggested in the revised African programme. At the time of writing this review the following countries had sent in replies, viz, Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Central African Pepublic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Kanya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, United Republic of Cameroon, Upper Volta and Swaziland. The replies show that all the countries listed above except one are compiling one or more price index numbers.
- 24. It may be recalled that a working group on price statistics was convened in June 1979 in Addis Ababa. A follow-up meeting scheduled for October 1933 to review the progress and relevance of the work programme for the development of price statistics formulated by the first working group and discuss further steps needed to achieve its basic objects, was not convened due to financial constraints. Efforts to obtain external funding for the working group to be convened in 1983 were not successful. Fortunately, the Statistical Office of the European Communities agreed to devote time to some of the agenda items proposed for this meeting in its International ComparisonProject Africa Phase IV-meeting which convened in Addis Ababa, just before our present meeting.
- 25. With regard to the International Comparison Project (ICP) it should be noted that the project is now in its fourth Phase (1979-1984) and that the Statistical Office of the European Community (SOBC) is the co-ordinating agency. During the current fourth round of comparisons the goal of the ICP has been to extend coverage to about 70 countries but with reduced comparisons of item contained in the three earlier phases. Fifteen African countries viz. Botswana, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Menya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Genegal, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uniter Republic of Cameroon, United Pepublic of Tanzania and Zambia are taking part in the current phase as against no African country among the 10 countries in Phase 1, only Kenya among 16 countries in Phase II and Kenya, Malawi and Zambia out of 34 countries in Phase III. SOEC favours the further expansion of the project in Africa to the extent of embracing all African countries in Phase V. At its twenty-second session, 2-16 March 1983 the UN Statistical Commission accorded the ICP high priority and suggested that emphasis be given to completing Phase IV comparisons and planning Phase V.
- 26. It should be added that the ECA Secretariat is making every effort to establish a closer relationship between ICP and the more general effort of the African region to develop price statistics, which include the proposed new

inter-agency programme. The existing separation of the two projects is detrimental to all aspects of price statistics development in the ragion and, with the anticipated extension of ICP to more African countries in its next phase, the position can easily become worse. Ideally, the methodological framework and the data requirements of ICP should be developed in such a way that they take into account the requirements of the world programme as well as those of regional endeavours.

V. Industrial Statistics

- 27. During the past two years work has continued on the development of a data base comprising files on general industrial statistics, commodity production, index numbers of industrial production and energy statistics. Various sources including national and international publications have been used, but there is still a serious problem of gaps in the general industrial statistics series available at ECA.
- 28. As was mentioned in the previous meeting of this committee, the UN Statistical Office has central responsibility for the collection of industrial data from all countries of the world. The ECA's part is therefore to fulfil a supporting role with respect to the African region, by ensuring that reliable, up-to-date and adequate data are sent regularly by member States to the central collecting point, for it is from this central collecting point that data are copied to ECA for incorporation in its own files.
- 29. The problem however does not seem to lie solely with lags in the dissemination of industrial data. In a number of countries industrial data series especially for the informal sector are not available. This situation is unfortunate since promotion of industrial development in the African region in general, and in each African country in particular, constitutes a fundamental option in the total range of activities in the 'Plan of action for the implementation of the Monrovia strategy for the economic development of Africa'. Industrial statistics development should therefore rank high in the list of priorities even in countries where industry is still in its infancy. The ECA continued its missions to countries to ascertain the needs of national statistical offices in developing more comprehensive and timely industrial data. However, because of limited resources, the number of country visits undertaken lately has been small.

V4. Implementation of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics

30. Within the framework of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics, the third programme of the kind organized under the auspices of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the two earlier programmes having been organized in 1963 and 1973, a Regional Industrial Census Training Workshop for Frenchispeaking African countries was held in January/February 1983 in Dakar (Senegal), under the co-sponsorship of the Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics, UNIDO and ECA. The workshop which was a follow-up to a similar one convened for English-speaking African countries in Addis Ababa in January/February 1982 under the co-sponsorship of the same agencies, concentrated mainly on the review of the over-all planning, co-ordination and direction of national census operations. Twenty statisticians from the following countries participated in the programme: Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, United Republic of Cameroon and Zaire.

31. Is regards the programme implementation at the national level the information available at the time of uniting this report concerns the extent of anticipated country participation in the programme which has been derived from replies to a questionnaire sent by the UN Statistical Office in 1930 to all countries of the world. Twenty-five African countries resistance their intention to participate in the programme. These were: Detswans, Turundi, Tentral African Capublic, Chad, Loyan, Equatorial Guinea, Cambia, Chana, Ivery Coast, Manya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mali, Morecce, Miseria, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Turisia, Uganda, United Pepublic of Cameroon, Maire and Zimbahwe.

External trade statistics

- 32. During the recording period, external trade statistics has been fully computerized with programmes for data management as well as data retrieval. The main concern however has been the completion of external trade data base with un-to-date information available in the secretariat on magnetic tames reclived fro that un-to-date information on external trade statistics is not available in the secretariat for a good number of countries of the region in spite of the contacts that have been established with countries.
- 33. Lack of adequate financial resources has prevented the secretariat from undertaking as many country missions as it would have wished, to assist countries in improving the timeliness and accuracy of their external trade data. However, a study is planned for 1984 in which the secretariat will endeavour to find out the reasons for the difficulties encountered in the processing of external trade statistics in ECA member States and process solutions for the improvement of the existing situation.
- 34. The preparation of Foreign trade statistics for Africa, Series A Direction of total trade; Series B trade by commodity and by country, and Series C Surmary tables have continued as in the past. The necessary manual processing of Series B has been done in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office (UNSO). The difficulties which have been encountered have been due primarily to lack of adequate computer time and facilities, printing delays as well as compower resources. In this regard, serious consideration is being given to the possibility of phasing out the which is now being included in UNSC take over publication of the information which is now being included in UNSC Series D.
- 35. In spite of these difficulties, activities in connection with the development of the regional statistical data base have been naintained. The bulkiest set accounts data have been computerised and are up-to-date for all African countries, but data for recent years includes a high proportion of ECA estimates in the absence of official country data. Computer files have also been established for industrial and price statistics.

VIII. Transport and Communications

- 36. It will be recalled that the division carried out two inquiries in 1979, the first collected data on mode of transport and communications for the period 1967-1978, the second related to the organization for the collection of transport and communication statistics. Much of the material for the data base on transport and communications statistics has same from these inquiries, but the material needs to be up-dated.
- 37. Recently, the Transport, Communications and Tourism bivision of the secretariat with the help of consultancy services collected data relating to operation and manpower in the fields of broadcasting and post and telemormunications from countries. The Statistics Division is helping with processing of the material which is expected to be published soon.

IM. Other Economic Statistics

38. The secretariat's work on the development of data base series in acriculture, the public sector, external transactions and tourism statistics has been maintained. The work is done by manual operations, but details are being worked out for computerization of the material and in a few cases computerization has actually started. More the moment however, priority is being given to computerization of data series medial for the African Statistical Yearbook.

X. Availability of Economic Statistics

- 39. Although work on the development of a data base and computerized files in economic statistics has been maintaine', a major constraint is the availability of current data. By availability is meant data in the ECA from official or semi-official sources. The attached table shows the position by country in June 1983 on the latest year for which a particular series was available.
- 40. For national accounts, the latest year for which official data were available was 1981 and the data were for 10 countries only, accounting for 50 per cent of the GDP for developing Africa for that year. Data were mostly in respect of GDP by kind of accounting activity, expenditure on GDP, capital formation (by type of capital goods. Onlyin a few cases were data available on capital formation by type of purchaser, or by kind of activity or industry) and external transactions. Latest data in respect of the public sector were for 1982 for 9 countries, not all countries showing functional and beamonic classifications of expenditure. Balance of payments and external transactions data for 1931 in respect of 22 countries and 5 countries respectively. For general industrial statistics the latest data related to 1930 and were in respect of 2 countries only.
- 41. The present position as regards the availability of official or semiofficial data in the field of economic statistics in ECA is far from satisfactory.
 Attempts to improve on the situation by requesting countries to send to the
 secretariat copies of their statistical publications have senerally not been
 very successful. In spite of that, it is pratifying to note that some countries
 have regularly sent their publications to ECA, but there are a good number of
 other countries which have not been sending their publications, and the overall position seems to have deteriorated in recent years.

- 42. While it is appreciated that at the country level there exists some gaps in the publication of derived data such as national accounts and balance of payments there certainly exists a mass of administrative data such as external trade, government revenue and expenditure, by products of administrative records including production and price data which are readily available and can be collected, processed and published without much time lag. It is quite possible that a good number of statistical services in the region are compiling and publishing these statistics, but for a number of countries the material is either not available at ECA or when available is out-of-date.
- 43. For derived data like the national accounts the position is somewhat different. Here the main problem lies with the availability of consistent and comprehensive basic data series for bench-mark years such as censuses and surveys on agriculture, population, industrial production etc. for compilation of the accounts. To overcome these difficulties, a variety of methods have been resorted to including ad-hoc collection of data on agriculture, industry, distribution etc.
- 44. The result is that the national accounts for some countries have been published with a time lag of up to five years, by which time these statistics have become so belated that they are of no use for planning and policy formulation.
- 45. The situation points to the need for countries to endeavour to strengthen their statistical infrastructure and to develop their basic data series. NACP should offer some solution in this regard especially as it aims at ensuring that national work on economic statistics is properly managed in the context of precise action programmes and timetables which reflect country requirements. However, as noted above, the success of the programme will depend to a great extent on the commitment of individual countries to the work programme and sustained action in its implementation.
- 46. It cannot be over emphasized that the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive and up-to-date regional data base in the secretariat depend largely on the support of the member States whom the system is intended to serve. It is therefore a conditio sine qua non that efforts be made by statistical services in the region to bring up-to-date their statistical publications and to forward copies of these publications on a regular basis to the Chief, ECA Statistics Division. Publications could be sent either by post, preferably air mail, or through the good offices of the United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in the country.
- 47. Whatever the difficulties, an improvement of the statistical system constitutes an integral part of a country's economic and social development. While it is well appreciated that there may be problems of resources to improve the statistical system, and that the necessary skills may not all be available, it must be noted that statistical services in the region can with the available resources and better management effect much needed improvement to their activities. The conduct of censuses, for example, may drain the limited resources available for statistical activities if special budgetary provision for them is not made, to the detriment of the immediate need to produce current economic statistics. But the cost of collecting, processing and disseminating economic statistics such as external trade, price and production indexes, so vital for identifying short-term price movements, transport and communication statistics etc. is small compared to census operations. Modern and properly designed sample surveys can produce as good as if not better results without much delay and at considerably lower cost than a complete enumeration attempted by censues.

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48. Essential requirements for the improvement of statistics in general and economic statistics in particular, are commitment to the task and the right order of priorities. Once the commitment has been made and the priorities determined, gaps in technical capabilities can be identified and filled. In this connexion, countries should take advantage of programmes designed by the ECA to enable them to improve their basic statistics. One such programme is the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AMSCP) designed to generate timely information on a variety of socio-aconomic subjects. Another is the NACP, a mechanism to improve basic data on general economic statistics such as industry, agriculture, transport and communications, distribution, prices etc. and create permanent capabilities for the compilation of national accounts in countries of the region.

Latest year official or semi-official data available at end June 1983

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			19/5	01.1		•	•	1976	13/6

Latest year official or semi-official data available at end June 1983

	Pri	(31					
	Consumer		General	Corrodity	Index	-	
	Price	Price	Industrial	Production	Numbers of	Energy	
	Index	Index	Statistics	Statistics	Industrial	Statistics	
NOTITE AND TO					reduction .		
			-				
Algeria	1978	•	1969	1980	1078	1000	
EVOT	1980	1930	1)76	1930	1972	2001 0001	
Libyan aral Jacahiriya	19.79	1979	1976	1930	1971	1980	
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**************************************	78.6T	1977	1969	1230	1980	1500	
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IMST AFRICAL							
Genin	•	:	•	C0 -		CCO -	
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Liberia	1979	:	:	1930 1		1000	
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Maurichnie	1500	:	:	1900	:	1980 1	
Miger	1080	•	1972	198C	•	1000	
Maccalla	1961	:	9261	1980	1531	1980	5 .
Senegal	1970	•	1975	1500	J86 I	1980	Si
Sterra Leone	1979	1931	:	1980	:	1930	ľ/1
······································	1973	:	1376	1386	:	1990	Ľ C ⊬
Upper Volta	1980	:	1976	J06I	:	153C	1/ P
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conco	1979	1279	1973	1930	•	1980 	
gruatorial Guinea	:	•	•	1980	:	0061	

fatest year official or somi-official data available at end June 1983

	Erices Consumer price Index	Wholesale price index	General Industrial Statistics	Commodity Production Statistics	Index Numbers of Industrial Production	Energy Statistics
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CONTRACT SWOISE (cont'd)				1986	:	0001
	1980	1)75		1030	•	000
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Zamilia	1991	:			; ;	
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	1970	• •	•		•	•
	•	:	•			
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