



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.3/473  
17 February 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Nineteenth session  
New Delhi, 8-19 November 1976  
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF  
STATISTICS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

BASIC PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

African household survey capability programme

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, at its sixth session, discussed the importance of developing national capabilities for carrying out household surveys on a continuing basis so as to provide timely and reliable social, economic and demographic statistics on an integrated basis and assigned a high priority to this effort. It also requested the Economic Commission for Africa to prepare a summary, for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its nineteenth session, of proposals that were being developed for improving national household survey capabilities in African countries.

The present document, which was prepared in response to that request (a) summarizes the considerations which led to the development of the proposed African household survey capability programme (paras. 4-17); (b) outlines the main features of the programme, including its national and regional components (paras. 18-25); (c) reviews some of the technical aspects of the national household survey activities envisaged under the programme (paras. 26-45); (d) describes the nature of international technical and financial assistance required (paras. 46-50); (e) considers the relationship between this programme and other ongoing statistical operations in African countries (paras. 51-56); and (f) indicates the relatively limited progress achieved so far in the programme's implementation (paras. 57-70).

The Commission may wish to comment on these proposals, consider their wider applicability to other developing regions and propose means of mobilizing further support for this activity.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1 - 2	3
I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION . . . . .	3	3
II. AFRICAN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CAPABILITY PROGRAMME . . . . .	4 - 70	3
A. Background considerations . . . . .	4 - 17	3
B. An outline of the proposed programme . . . . .	18 - 25	6
C. Main features of national survey activities . . . . .	26 - 45	8
D. Nature and timing of external assistance requirements . . . . .	46 - 50	12
E. Co-ordination with other activities . . . . .	51 - 56	13
F. Progress in implementing the programme . . . . .	57 - 70	13

Annex. Structure and estimated costs of average-sized  
survey organization

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its eighteenth session, the Statistical Commission was briefly informed of efforts aimed at assisting countries in the African region to develop continuing household survey capabilities. The Commission expressed its interest in this activity, considering "that information on households required more attention in the planning of development efforts and that countries should aim at collecting demographic, social and related economic data in a continuous and integrated manner". 1/ The matter was subsequently discussed at the sixth session of the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, which felt this work should receive high priority. Accordingly, the Working Group requested that a summary, prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa, of the proposed programme for establishing continuing household survey capabilities be presented to the Commission at its nineteenth session (E/CN.3/470, para. 7).

2. In response to this request, the present document (a) summarizes the considerations which led to the development of the proposed African household survey capability programme; (b) outlines the main features of the programme; (c) reviews some of the technical aspects of the national household survey activities envisaged under the programme; (d) describes the nature of international technical and financial assistance required; (e) considers questions of co-ordination with other activities; and (f) indicates the relatively limited progress achieved so far in the programme's implementation.

### I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

3. The Commission, after considering this document, may wish to: (a) comment on the soundness, orientation and content of the proposed African household survey capability programme; (b) consider the wider applicability of such a household survey capability programme to serve the evolving needs of countries in the other developing regions; and (c) consider means for mobilizing further support for this activity, both at the national and international level, in light of the relatively limited progress achieved so far in implementing the proposed African programme.

### II. AFRICAN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CAPABILITY PROGRAMME

#### A. Background considerations

1. The place of household surveys in national statistical programmes
4. National programmes of economic and social statistics obtain data either as

---

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5603), para. 54.

a by-product of administrative activity or through special inquiries. Administrative data include external trade, balance of payments and public finance statistics as well as information on the operation of education, health and other public services, and so on.

5. Special inquiries are necessary for the investigation of private activities and characteristics and are directed almost entirely towards establishments and households. Establishment inquiries deal with production, employment and general statistics. Household surveys are the primary source of a wide variety of current economic, demographic and social information. It is with this latter group of inquiries that the present document is concerned and it is first necessary to explain why the topic should be of special interest.

6. A great deal of work is already being done to improve external trade, financial, industrial and other general economic statistics, as well as national accounts which, aside from their intrinsic uses, serve to integrate these data. Such information is, of course, an essential background to development planning but it meets only part of the requirements.

7. It has to be remembered that private households are affected by economic and social changes and are themselves the suppliers of labour and other inputs which make the changes possible. Human well-being has to be regarded as the end-product of the development process. There are, therefore, many economic and social interrelationships which need to be understood if national and intercountry development efforts are to succeed. As a result, there is an increasing demand to measure the social impact of economic problems and development activities, and the contribution of social changes to economic and social productivity. For this purpose, a large number of base-line and trend series are needed on levels of living and inputs to welfare and on the quantity and quality of available human, as well as economic, resources and their distribution. For maximum usefulness, these must be susceptible of cross-classification with a variety of other data and data sources.

8. Initial emphasis with respect to household data in most countries is likely to be on economic activity which can be broadly defined as employment, other productive activity, income, consumption and expenditure. All these kinds of data can be obtained on a continuing basis through properly organized household surveys. An important by-product of ongoing household survey work should be intercensal data on population, fertility etc. because of their many continuing applications.

9. The need for improved data on households is implicit in the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade which embodies a unified approach to economic and social development. Although the Strategy may require some modification in the light of current efforts to establish a more equitable world economic order, the fundamental necessity of knowing more about household activities and conditions will remain. The importance of integrated economic and social statistics has been stressed by the Statistical Commission for some time and was emphasized at the 1974 World

Population Conference, which recommended that population and development should be considered together and that surveys should be developed for the collection of better basic data.

10. The foregoing considerations indicate why African countries are particularly keen to establish continuing household survey capabilities. In addition, it should be borne in mind that increased interest in this matter is to some extent attributable to the African Census Programme, which has made many countries aware of the usefulness of surveys of all kinds and has created a confidence in the ability to conduct them. A brief description of the current status of African surveys and the efforts of the Conference of African Statisticians to improve the situation is given in the following sections.

## 2. The present state of survey work in Africa

11. At the technical level, African countries are acutely aware that shortfalls in relevant and timely information on the characteristics and activities of their inhabitants frequently hamper national development efforts. In the years following independence, there were significant efforts to develop household surveys as a means of direct data collection in various fields of statistics, but the work declined around 1970. Apart from the usual difficulties experienced in carrying out many development efforts, this earlier survey effort faltered, in part, because of the utilization of available resources in population and agricultural censuses and the insecure status of statistical services within governmental structures which has led to a severe loss of professional staff.

12. Another drawback of earlier household survey work was the isolated nature of previous African surveys. Even in cases where there were active programmes of field inquiries, subjects tended to be dealt with separately and there was little attempt to establish analytical linkages between the various operations.

13. Since 1971, the African Census Programme has significantly improved statistics of the region. It has received financial assistance from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) with the aim of encouraging countries that found it difficult to participate in the 1970 round of population censuses to do so. Apart from producing much needed population data, the programme is providing trained personnel, expertise in field operations and national geographical frames which are all essential for other kinds of surveys.

14. In response to national expressions of expanded needs for statistics, an increase in more general survey activity is also now evident and a few countries are working systematically on the development of integrated programmes. Other countries are conducting demographic and economic surveys on a more ad hoc basis. It is clear that most countries of the region could establish adequate and continuing data collection arrangements with technical and financial support.

3. The need for a concerted effort

15. The position with respect to African surveys was reviewed by the Conference of African Statisticians at its eighth session, in 1973, and it was agreed that the time was opportune for the improvement of all aspects of household sector statistics as a follow-up to the current population census activities.

16. At the request of the Conference, the technical and practical requirements were examined by a Working Group on Methodology, Organization and Content of Household Surveys in September 1974. The Group's recommendations were then consolidated in a comprehensive proposal for the African Household Survey Capability Programme, the main features of which are summarized in the present paper. Moreover, the Economic Commission for Africa at its twelfth session and third meeting of the Conference of Ministers, adopted resolution 272 (XII) on 28 February 1975, by which inter alia, it welcomed the efforts of the Conference of African Statisticians in this matter and urged the undertaking of "multipurpose household surveys for the collection of integrated demographic social and economic data through the establishment of a field surveys mechanism". 2/

17. In addition to the welcome it received from African countries, the proposal is strongly supported by several United Nations and other international agencies because of the contribution it can make in improving data on education, health, employment, productive activity, income distribution, patterns of consumption expenditure, fertility, mortality, migration etc. which will greatly help to better define and implement needed action in these areas. Additional work has been undertaken in collaboration with the agencies concerned to specify data requirements in detail in order to provide a basis on which countries can formulate continuing programmes of surveys in the light of their own priorities.

B. An outline of the proposed programme

18. The general programme proposal envisages technical and financial assistance to some 30 countries of the region in establishing ongoing household survey capabilities. It is clear that the work will need to be spread over a fairly long period and that the programme will require both international and bilateral support.

19. The arrangements proposed for assisting the development of household surveys need to be considered in relation to those for the African Census Programme from which they have been derived in the light of experience. In the past, United Nations assistance in applying international statistical recommendations took the form of country and regional expert services, seminars and training courses, plus material assistance, where appropriate. In addition, world census programmes have been used

---

2/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 10 (E/5657), vol. I, p. 109.

to encourage the collection of benchmark data in various fields. A somewhat different kind of assistance was initiated by the African Census Programme. The difference arises from the size of the programme, the inclusion of a contribution to local costs and the existence of specially organized regional supporting services.

20. The development of household survey capabilities is regarded as a natural sequel to the work on population censuses. A programme for this purpose must include technical assistance projects at the country level, a regional supporting service and the normal administrative and technical support from United Nations Headquarters in much the same way as the African Census Programme.

21. However, the programme will differ in some important respects from its predecessor. Moreover, operational difficulties encountered in the initial stages of the African Census Programme provided a number of practical lessons in the organization of large-scale assistance to statistical development. Continuing survey programmes involve less organizational work than population censuses and it is intended that a strong regional advisory team will make it unnecessary to recruit large numbers of country experts. It has also been suggested that this team could operate more effectively from strategic points throughout the region rather than from ECA headquarters.

22. Secondly, countries are not likely to embark on household surveys before they have completed their censuses, so operations are likely to build up in a natural manner rather than in the forced context of an emergency programme. There will thus be adequate time for the proper planning of country projects and for the establishment of a satisfactory regional advisory service.

23. A third consideration is that the new programme is aimed at the collection of a very much wider variety of data than the census programme, so a rather flexible multidisciplinary approach is essential. This flexibility necessarily extends beyond the scope of household surveys because the establishment of permanent field survey organizations will also provide better facilities for collecting statistics of industry, prices, etc.

24. The fourth main difference lies in the financial arrangements for the programme. Because of the broad subject coverage, it is not envisaged that any single agency will serve as principal sponsor. It is hoped that the United Nations funds concerned with economic and social development and with population questions will take an active interest in the programme as a whole, but operations in individual countries will also provide wide scope for assistance from all kinds of international and bilateral sources. In this connexion, it should be borne in mind that, by participating in the programme, African countries will commit themselves to maintaining permanent survey capabilities; the assistance they receive will therefore be of lasting value rather than a contribution to an ad hoc operation.

25. The foregoing description of how the African Household Surveys Programme is being developed from the current effort in respect of population censuses may provide some indication of how earlier methods of assisting statistical development can be improved through the use of operational programmes with specific objectives. The lessons learned so far are that it is unwise to concentrate such programmes too much in restricted subject fields and that rigidity in organizational concepts and arrangements should be avoided. The African Household Surveys Programme overcomes these difficulties, but presents a new problem in terms of its need for support from a number of donor agencies and countries.

### C. Main features of national survey activities

26. Although the establishment of projects to assist individual countries in developing and operating household survey capabilities is a relatively straightforward matter, there are a number of questions which require special consideration. These include the kinds of data which household surveys will be expected to produce, the organizations needed for collecting the data, the survey arrangements to be used in multisubject programmes, the amount and timing of the technical and other assistance needed and the co-ordination of household surveys with other statistical activities. The following notes briefly summarize the position with respect to each of these topics.

#### 1. Household data requirements

27. In broad terms data to be collected from households are in the following seven fields: demographic characteristics; health; food consumption and nutrition; housing conditions and facilities; educational characteristics and cultural activities; employment; economic level of the household. These fields cover the topics mentioned in paragraph 30 which are likely to be given initial priority in most African countries.

28. There are significant relationships between all these fields, which means that it is necessary to be able to cross-classify data for analytical purposes. However, all subjects cannot be investigated simultaneously so that the work must be spread over a number of separate survey rounds. To meet both these requirements, it is intended that all survey rounds should incorporate a common set of core questions.

29. Under these circumstances, it is possible to group the subject fields according to kind and size of sample required. Thus migration, fertility and mortality, all of which call for rather large samples, can conveniently be investigated together. Another group might include health, employment and education, using samples comprising fairly large numbers of primary units in each of which only a relatively few households would be investigated. The third main group would consist of inquiries into the economic level of households, plus food consumption and other topics, for all of which rather small samples have to be used because records need to be collected over reasonably long periods.



30. At the request of the Working Group on Methodology, Organization and Content of Household Surveys, the ECA Statistics Division has undertaken additional research on household data requirements in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and the relevant specialized agencies. The results are available in a report presented to the ninth session of the Conference of African Statisticians, "List of household data requirements" (E/CN.14/CAS.9/10) and take the form of a list which distinguishes between core questions and other items. The core questions have been divided between those which might be asked during preliminary enumerations and those to be applied at the ultimate sampling stage. The first of these two groups includes questions which could be used in forming strata at the ultimate sampling stage.

31. Data to be collected in the various survey rounds have been grouped according to sampling requirements along the lines suggested above. However, the groups can be subdivided in a number of ways to specify the content of individual rounds in the light of national requirements. The list incorporates questions on some aspects of agriculture, as well as data on household enterprise transactions.

32. With a suitable grouping of topics, it will be possible to obtain comprehensive household data through a four-year repetitive cycle of surveys. However, it must be emphasized that the arrangement is highly flexible. For example, some countries might wish to collect economic data nearly every year and to rely on the preliminary enumerations and less frequent surveys to obtain information on other subjects.

33. It should also be noted that some components of the principal subject fields require investigation at different levels of sampling and this may affect the grouping of topics. A further point is that frequent changes in subjects investigated during survey programme cycles and the differing sampling arrangements required, together with the mobility of African households and the problem of response burden, probably rule out the use of any kind of continuing sample of households. Nevertheless, there are prospects for continuity in sampling arrangements at the level of area units. One African country is establishing an experimental national sample on this basis.

## 2. Development of permanent field survey organizations

34. African statisticians are agreed that the nature and extent of data required now and in the future can be provided most effectively by the development and maintenance of permanent field survey organizations. The Working Group in September 1974 gave detailed attention to the probable cost of the establishment of such a field survey organization and of related technical services required for a continuing national household survey capability. It was also agreed that the benefits from this activity, in terms of a new capacity to provide decision makers in African countries with the information needed for integrated policy planning and programmes for social and economic development, would fully justify this cost.

35. As already indicated, a number of countries in the region have survey organizations and a few of these have more than 400 enumerators. The Working

Group felt that a more modest field force would be appropriate for most countries and based its estimates on a strength of 200 enumerators, plus supervisory staff, operating through four regional offices in each country. Account was also taken of survey planning, execution, processing and analysis which involves supporting facilities in the central statistical office, and provision was made for travelling and transport, equipment and supplies, etc. The components and their annual costs derived from actual budget data are shown in the annex.

36. The Working Group believed that smaller countries of the region - perhaps one third of the 30 expected to participate in the programme - might not be able to embark on field operations of the scale envisaged in the annex. Such countries would probably wish to establish field organizations with about 50 enumerators. They would need to pool survey results over longer periods to achieve statistically significant results, or supplement their staff on an ad hoc basis when necessary. The possibility of several smaller countries in Africa establishing one or more of the needed infrastructure services (for example, sampling, cartography, data processing or printing) as a common undertaking was also considered.

37. It is appreciated that many difficulties have to be faced in establishing continuing survey capabilities. In earlier years, opinion was against the use of permanent field staff but the position has now changed. Careful planning and training are needed to ensure that the staff are continuously employed and efficient. Nearly all countries of the region have now reached the point that a permanent field organization of some size is a necessary and realizable objective. Care is also required in avoiding excessive pressure on professional staff and data-processing facilities. However, there is sufficient experience in the region to overcome these problems.

38. During the period when survey organizations are being developed, inquiries may be of limited geographical coverage or deal with regions in succession. African statisticians have urged that this phase should not last too long and that countries aiming at larger field organizations should build up their staff to full strength in about four years. Those intending to employ only about 50 enumerators could probably achieve full strength in the first year. These estimates are of course over-simplifications because the ways in which field organizations are built up can differ widely between countries; they are intended mainly to indicate the magnitude of the over-all programme. Each country participating in the programme will have to decide on its own time-table for developing a permanent field organization in light of national data needs and resources and the external assistance available.

### 3. Survey arrangements for a multisubject programme

39. The foregoing considerations with respect to household data requirements and field organizations lead to the following basic arrangements for survey operations.

40. It can normally be expected that a new survey round will be undertaken in each year of the programme cycle. Each round will include a preliminary listing

of households and, at the ultimate stage, inquiries will be of two basic types: single-visit inquiries involving fairly large samples or repeated visits to relatively small samples of households. In most countries an enumeration area frame should be available from a recent population census but this will often need some improvement and updating before it can be used for sampling.

41. The desirability of the preliminary listing operation has been examined at length and it has been noted that many countries try to avoid such a listing operation through the use of tax lists etc. However, this operation appears to be necessary in view of the mobility of households and it is also useful as a source of basic data. There would be some prospect of reducing the listing operation after the first round of a survey cycle by enumerating only the area units introduced into the sample on a partial replacement basis and using previous listings for the remainder.

42. The number of households that can be covered at the first sampling stage is, of course, dependent on the number of enumerators, the number of area units handled by each and the number of households in individual area units. Under favourable conditions, a force of 200 enumerators could pre-list 100,000 households in a little more than one month, but a first-stage sample of this size would not be necessary for most purposes.

43. In years when the main investigation consists of a single-visit inquiry involving a fairly substantial questionnaire, the ultimate-stage sample size would be of the order of 16,000 households. In other years, more detailed inquiries such as those of the household budget type requiring repeated visits would be confined to samples of 4,000 or less.

44. Taking into account the preliminary enumeration, drawing of the ultimate-stage sample, the main survey, plus the time needed for training, editing, coding, record-keeping and other non-field activities, the field force would be occupied for the greater part of each year on either one of the two types of survey described above. Detailed estimates indicate that some time might be available for non-household inquiries but it is unlikely that this would be achieved in the early stages of the work.

45. It should be noted that fulfilment of the annual field operations envisaged requires that there should be no delay in drawing the ultimate-stage sample, so procedures have to be carefully planned in advance. It is also intended that the greater part of the coding should be done in the field. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the survey arrangements indicated here are of a simplified and tentative nature, intended mainly to show that field organizations of the size proposed are sufficient to deal with a comprehensive programme of effective surveys. The actual sample size required in the various rounds of the survey programme in any given country can only be determined following a comprehensive and detailed review of the country's needs, circumstances and statistical development plans.

D. Nature and timing of external assistance requirements

46. It is believed that each participating country would require assistance for about four years at the level of approximately one third of the total expenditure on its field organization. This is, of course, a very crude estimate based on experience in the African Census Programme. At the end of this period of assistance, it is anticipated that most countries would be able to maintain their field organizations on a permanent basis.

47. In addition, countries which already have field organizations will probably wish to benefit from the programme but their needs will be limited largely to regional advisory services. These countries also have a contribution to make in terms of technical experience which can be transferred to those just beginning field operations. Assistance would, nevertheless, be required to support a regional training activity every second year during the entire programme period of about eight years in order to ensure that such exchanges of experience take place as the programme evolves, as well as provide other opportunities to improve the technical background of African statisticians working on national survey programmes.

48. It was the feeling of the Working Group and the Conference of African Statisticians that the programme should avoid the use of country experts as far as possible. Instead, a reasonably strong team of regional advisers should be made available. This would comprise at least two experts in sample surveys, with supporting specialists in economic statistics, demographic and social statistics and data processing as soon as the programme is properly under way. An additional statistician will probably be needed at United Nations Headquarters for co-ordination purposes, and there will be the normal requirements for administrative support.

49. Taking into account local conditions as far as possible and assuming that some 30 countries will need a considerable amount of assistance, it is likely that some 12 countries will wish to begin their participation during the first three years of the programme, with a further 18 entering during the second three years. The distribution of these countries according to subregion is as follows:

Estimated entry times to household surveys programme

<u>Subregion</u>	<u>First three years</u>	<u>Second three years</u>
North Africa	1	1
West Africa	4	7
Central Africa	3	4
East Africa	4	6
Total	12	18

50. Estimates of the over-all cost of the Household Surveys Programme were prepared by the Working Group in September 1974 but are not repeated in the present paper because of their tentative nature. The annual cost at 1974 prices

/...

of a field organization employing 200 enumerators is given in the annex. As already indicated, perhaps 10 of the 30 countries likely to participate would opt for smaller organizations costing about one quarter of this amount.

#### E. Co-ordination with other activities

51. The timing of country participation in the proposed household survey programme must be closely co-ordinated with plans for undertaking other major statistical operations, such as a population census or an agriculture census, and related technical assistance activities.

52. As a result of recent national censuses carried out with support from the African Census Programme, only a very small number of countries in the region have not yet carried out a population census. Since the successful completion of a census is, in many respects, a prerequisite for the establishment of sound ongoing survey operations, countries will not be expected to participate in the household survey programme until they have completed their population censuses. A number of countries which have recently taken population censuses are already requesting advice on household surveys and regional staff are not available for this purpose.

53. A further important link between the census and survey operations lies in the development of geographical sampling frames. As a basis for census enumerations, each country has to be divided into small geographical areas in which the field work can be handled by one person. These frames need to be maintained on a permanent basis for future surveys and censuses.

54. A number of African countries expect to participate in the World Fertility Survey but no problems of co-ordination are foreseen. Indeed, considerable advantages for both activities can be obtained by carrying out the World Fertility Survey operations in the context of the household survey programme activities. The separate financial arrangements for fertility surveys can easily be taken into account when preparing the more general country projects for developing household surveys.

55. In the case of the World Employment Survey, there may be somewhat similar considerations regarding co-ordination. In addition, household surveys will provide the means of collecting the necessary data on a continuing basis.

56. Collection of agricultural statistics should also be regarded as an activity related to the programme. The same geographical frame serves both kinds of inquiry, agricultural questions are often included in household surveys, and in some countries there may be a common field organization.

#### F. Progress in implementing the programme

57. It will be seen from the foregoing that preparatory work on this programme has now reached the stage where field operations to develop national survey capabilities could begin. The principal requirements now are, therefore, staff and financial resources.

58. Funding of the programme has been widely discussed and, as indicated in paragraph 24, there is no possibility of obtaining support from a single agency in the same way as for the African Census Programme. The size and duration of the new programme are relevant considerations. It, therefore, has to be regarded as a group of country projects, co-ordinated through a common regional service, and financed from a number of international and bilateral sources. However, a nucleus of the regional staff is a prerequisite for the development of technically sound country projects required to generate support for the initiation of actual field survey operations. In this respect, the United Nations must play the leading role.

59. For this purpose a two-year preparatory project covering 1976-1977 has been submitted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is intended to provide two regional experts in sample surveys who would be available to work full time with countries of the region on the improvement of survey programmes which already exist and in drawing up plans for the establishment of such programmes in countries where systematic work has not yet begun. It should be possible to begin the implementation of these plans in at least a few countries during the preparatory period. Towards the end of the two years, progress will be examined in order to establish concrete arrangements for the continuation and expansion of the work. The outcome of this request to UNDP is not known as yet. Moreover, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which provided financial support for convening the September 1974 Working Group on Methodology, Organisation and Content of Household Surveys, referred to in paragraph 16 above, has as yet committed no additional resources to the survey programme.

60. The over-all position described in this paper was reviewed by the Conference of African Statisticians at its ninth session in October 1975. <sup>3/</sup> The Conference strongly reaffirmed its support for the programme, which is expected to make an important contribution to statistical development in the region. Additional points which arose during the discussion are summarized below.

61. It was felt that the list of household data requirements will need some adaptation for use in rural areas and, also, that some attention should be given to items dealing with cultural activities and services. With regard to household transactions, the Conference believed that it would be better to avoid imputed items except where specially important. On the general question of subject priorities, the Conference agreed with the view that stress should be placed on the importance of obtaining household economic data in the survey programme.

62. Some countries were concerned about the phasing of the programme described in paragraph 49 above. It was, however, pointed out that this is simply an assessment of the rate at which field activities might develop and implies no constraint on country participation. It was also noted that countries already

---

<sup>3/</sup> "Report of the ninth session of the Conference of African Statisticians" (E/CN.14/646, 6 January 1976), document issued by the Economic Commission for Africa, paras. 197-213.

possessing survey organizations might need other kinds of assistance in addition to regional advisory services.

63. The adequacy of a four-year cycle of surveys for the collection of comprehensive household data was questioned. However, bearing in mind that some survey rounds would require only single visits to ultimate-stage households, it was agreed that all subjects could be covered within the period suggested. The importance of preliminary enumerations as a means of establishing satisfactory frames for household selection was also stressed.

64. The use of core questions for the purpose of integrating the results of different survey rounds was examined. The suggestions already made were considered a useful starting point but would need some further development. The Conference welcomed a secretariat proposal to supply draft questionnaires for surveys in the various subject fields but pointed out that full standardization was not feasible in view of the cultural, social and economic differences between countries of the region.

65. Because of the complexity of survey operations, the Conference believed that countries should aim at recruiting enumeration staff with good educational qualifications. The importance of training, particularly for specialized surveys, was also stressed although it was appreciated that needs in this respect would decline as survey organizations gained experience. In general, the scope of survey operations would have to be geared to resources available in individual countries.

66. Reference was made to the disadvantages of multisubject surveys and there still appeared to be some misunderstanding on this point. The Conference agreed that the problem would not affect the development of household survey capabilities along the lines proposed because the essential concept is the use of multisubject programmes of surveys in which subject grouping will be used only when sample sizes and designs are compatible.

67. Representatives of specialized agencies and the World Fertility Survey confirmed their interest in the programme as a means of improving statistics in their own particular fields.

68. In conclusion, it was urged that countries should specify their individual survey requirements through the normal channels for requesting technical assistance in order to establish a firmer basis for financial and organizational arrangements.

69. A great deal of preparatory work has been undertaken on the African Household Surveys Programme and ECA believes that it will be a very rewarding effort for the region. Enough has been written about it and the important requirement now is to begin practical work on a modest scale in a few countries. This will serve to demonstrate the usefulness of household survey capabilities, provide a basis for revising some of the preliminary concepts and enable more concrete work to be done on the drafting of questionnaires, development of survey designs etc. Once the field work begins, faster progress can be expected.

70. Ultimately the success of the programme is, of course, dependent on the willingness and ability of countries in the region to embark on new statistical operations and the response of international and bilateral agencies to requests for external assistance for this endeavour. The statisticians of the region have indicated that the programme is sound from a technical viewpoint and the third meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers has endorsed the need for this programme. The fundamental remaining question is how to mobilize needed external support for this urgently needed development effort in the light of the financial constraints encountered by many traditional sources of external assistance.



Annex

STRUCTURE AND ESTIMATED COSTS OF AVERAGE-SIZED  
 SURVEY ORGANIZATION a/  
 (U.S. dollars)

	<u>Low-cost</u> <u>budget</u>	<u>High-cost</u> <u>budget</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>budget</u>
<u>I. Personnel</u>			
<u>Central statistical office</u>			
Senior technical staff:			
1 statistician in charge of survey operations	3,000	5,340	3,840
1 statistician for analysis and reports	3,000	5,340	3,840
Survey administration and processing:			
1 programmer	3,000	5,340	3,840
1 executive officer	1,308	2,376	1,848
3 clerical officers	1,728	3,816	2,952
6 clerical assistants	2,736	4,608	3,552
2 punchers and 2 verifiers	1,824	3,074	2,368
Geographical frame:			
1 higher clerical officer	1,272	1,596	1,440
1 clerical officer	576	1,272	984
1 clerical assistant	456	768	592
<u>Regional offices</u>			
4 senior executive officers	8,832	12,000	10,560
4 higher clerical officers	5,088	6,384	5,760
12 clerical officers	6,912	15,264	11,808
4 secretaries	3,504	7,104	5,400
4 drivers	2,736	4,656	3,696
4 messengers	1,200	2,160	1,680
<u>Field staff</u>			
4 executive officers (senior supervisory staff)	5,232	9,504	7,392
8 higher clerical officers (senior supervisory staff)	10,176	12,768	11,520
30 supervisors (clerical officer level)	17,280	38,160	29,520

	<u>Low-cost budget</u>	<u>High-cost budget</u>	<u>Average budget</u>
<b>I. Personnel (continued)</b>			
<u>Field staff (continued)</u>			
200 enumerators (clerical assistant level)	91,200	153,600	118,400
Provision for employment of temporary or part-time enumerators	9,120	15,360	11,840
<b>II. Travelling and transport</b>			
<u>Vehicle allowances etc.</u>			
Motor-cars (statistician and heads of regional offices) 5 at \$780	3,900	3,900	3,900
Motorcycles (senior field supervisory staff) 12 at \$252	3,024	3,024	3,024
Mileage claims	7,000	7,000	7,000
Running and maintenance of cross-country vehicles 4 at \$2,400	9,600	9,600	9,600
Allowances to staff with continuing travelling duties 4 at \$336	1,344	1,344	1,344
8 at \$336	2,688	2,688	2,688
30 at \$336	10,080	10,080	10,080
200 at \$168	33,600	33,600	33,600
Transport expenses of field staff without personal vehicles 30 at \$672	20,160	20,160	20,160
200 at \$72	14,400	14,400	14,400
<b>III. Equipment and supplies</b>			
Cross-country vehicles (amortized over a period of four years) 4 at \$1,200	4,800	4,800	4,800
Furniture and equipment for regional offices (amortized over a period of eight years) 4 at \$600	2,400	2,400	2,400
Special clothing, mosquito nets, water filters, medical supplies and other items that may be required by field staff 242 at \$100	24,200	24,200	24,200
Reproduction of questionnaires, instructions, maps etc., other field supplies and office supplies	30,000	30,000	30,000

---

	<u>Low-cost budget</u>	<u>High-cost budget</u>	<u>Average budget</u>
<hr/>			
IV. Miscellaneous			
Machine time and programming	3,000	3,000	3,000
Publications	5,000	5,000	5,000
Postage and telecommunications	10,000	10,000	10,000
Other	10,000	10,000	10,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total annual cost	375,376	505,686	438,028

---

Source: "African Household Surveys Programme" (E/CN.14/CAS.9/5, 1 April 1975), table 1.

a/ All cost figures expressed in terms of 1974 US dollars.

-----