

As written

ECA Population Activities: 1998-I 999

Since the last meeting of this Commission, the ECA Secretariat has continued to make progress in its population-centred programme aimed at reversing the downward economic situation in member States. To this end, a major activity of the ECA Secretariat focuses on highlighting for policy-makers, the synergistic effects of three well-documented continental trends : rising population growth, declining agricultural production and increasing degradation of the environment. Several activities of the ECA Secretariat have resulted in the preparation of a major report on African performance in implementing the Dakar/Ngor Declaration (DND) and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-PA). **In addition, the** ECA Secretariat has continued to conduct collaborative research, organize training courses, provide advisory services while also disseminating population information and « **best practices** ».

To call African policy-makers' urgent attention to the negative impact of the combined effects of rising population growth, **declining** agricultural production and Increasing degradation of the environment, the ECA Secretariat has prepared a computer

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- **simulation model for use as an advocacy tool aimed at changing policy environment in member States.**

The model will aid comprehension, within a holistic framework, of the inter-linkages between population change (P), environment (E), socio-economic development (D) and agriculture (A), (PEDA) and is intended for use in demonstrating the impact of different policy options in relation to the goal of ensuring food security. The model is, therefore, a major planning tool for sustainable development at the national level. To-date, prototypes of the PEDA model exist for Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Zambia and plans are under-way to develop the PEDA Model for 4 other countries. The model, as a planning tool, is already being introduced in the training programme of some of the regional population and development institutions.

During 1998, the ECA through its Subregional Development Centres (of which there are five in East, West, North, South and Central Africa) have also organized several seminars on the population, agriculture and environment interrelationships.

To monitor and assess the implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA, the ECA Secretariat undertook several activities and organized meetings at which member States exchanged information on their experiences, particularly the policy changes that have occurred since ICDP, five years ago, constraints encountered and success stories.

As a first step in an in-depth assessment of African countries' experiences in implementing the DND and the ICPD-PA, the ECA administered a follow-up questionnaire to all member States. Subsequently, the First Meeting of the Working Group of the Follow-up Committee was convened in Dakar, 6-7 May 1998 to define the inputs of sub-regional population and development institutions into a regional assessment i.e. *Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD)*, Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), *Institut africain de développement économique et de planification* (IDEP), Centre de recherche sur la population et le développement (CERPOD). The report from these institutions, completed questionnaires received from 41 countries, sub-regional reports provided by UNFPA and its Country Support Teams (CSTs) based in Addis Ababa, Dakar and Harare, as well as reports of two ECA-sponsored field missions to twelve countries have been

· synthesized in the regional report of African experiences in the implementation of the DND/ICPD-PA.

The report highlights the main achievements in the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action as well as constraints which had hindered progress in the following key programme areas: (i) Reproductive health and reproductive rights; (ii) Gender equality, empowerment of women and male involvement; (iii) Family, youth and adolescents; (iv) Advocacy and IEC strategies; (v) Population and development strategies; (vi) **NGOs**, civil society and private sector and, (vii) Institutional mechanisms for coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population programmes.

The Third Meeting of the Africa Follow-up Committee on the implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA met in **Addis Ababa**, September, 23-25, 1998 to review country-specific reports and to consider the regional report. The First Meeting of the ECA Committee on Sustainable Development involving representatives of 37 African Governments, international organizations and regional institutions, was held in **Addis Ababa**, in January this year. In a special session, the meeting reviewed the ICPD regional report and

made recommendations for the way forward. A summary of the revised, adopted report and recommendations was distributed to African delegates who attended The Hague Forum last February.

As the final stage of the review process, High-level Officials of National Population Commissions will discuss the report on African experiences in the implementation of the DND/ICPD-PA at the Third General Assembly of the African Population Commission, to be organized by the Joint **ECA/OAU/ADB** Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, from 10-15 May 1999. Subsequently, the report will be submitted for further comments to the next OAU Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Summit of African Head of States. The recommendations emanating from the Summit will comprise an input into the Special **ICPD+5** Session of the General Assembly planned to take place later this year.

In addition to the preparation of the Africa regional report, other follow-up activities of the ICPD-PA were accomplished by the ECA Secretariat jointly with the OAU and ADB. These included organization of two Seminars on population policy in Nairobi, 24-27 March 1998, and in Kinshasa, 8-10 June 1998, respectively. The

· **ECA Secretariat also took active part in the UNFPA Round Table on reproductive health and reproductive rights which was held in Kampala, 22-25 June 1998.**

In 1998, the ECA Secretariat undertook a special study on key issues and challenges associated with the demographic transition in selected African countries. This study analysed factors and issues delaying the demographic transition in the region compared with other regions and identified the main factors facilitating a significant decline in population growth and concluded with several policy and programmes recommendations. Another major activity is participation at the 20th Session of the ACC Sub-Committee on demographic estimates and projections in New-York, 24-25 June.

During 1999, the ECA will continue to provide, in cooperation with the UNFPA Technical Support Teams, advisory services and technical assistance on cartography, census taking, demographic data processing and analysis to member States.

The ECA Secretariat has two main channels for disseminating population information in the region. In partnership with the UNFPA/Global POPIN in New York, it has recently created its own

- **POPIN Web home page.** A Web site on Africa's ICPD follow-up activities has also been created. The Main links and the Smaller links of the core page originate from the background document, the Report on African experiences in the implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA.

Another channel for information dissemination is the production, beginning this year, of a twice-yearly Journal on Population and Development in Africa. It is expected that the Journal will become an important vehicle for monitoring and disseminating information on population trends, policies, national and sub-regional activities and research findings.

Later this year, the ECA Secretariat plans to organize a High-level Stake-holders workshop in **Addis Ababa** from 23-25 November to discuss activities for promoting sustainable development in the region including population policies and programmes.