

**REVIEW OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC LEVELS AND TRENDS
IN AFRICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION**

by

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I. Introduction :

1. The area of the African continent constitutes 22.0 per cent of the total land surface of the world and it is estimated to have contained in mid-1970, 355 million persons or almost 10.0 per cent of the total world population (3,632) thousand. The percentage share of Africa in world population was 7.9 per cent in the 1930's.

2. The estimated rate of annual increase of the African population was 1.9 per cent in the 1930's. It increased to 2.3 per cent during the period 1960/65; and to 2.5 per cent during the period 1965/70, compared to the annual rate of 2.0 per cent of the world population.

This rate of growth is next only to Latin America (2.8 per cent per year). According to the most recent UN estimates, Africa would have the highest rate of population growth among the world regions within the next two decades. Some African countries reached or are very close to the annual 3 per cent mark.

3. The average density in total area of the African continent was estimated in 1966 by 11 persons per square kilometer as compared to world total at 25 which is considered to be the most sparsely populated of all the world regions. The most densely populated sub-regions are the West and the East, (16 and 15 persons per square kilometer respectively).

4 The density in arable land was estimated at 135 persons in a square kilometer as compared to the world density of 231 in 1966.⁽¹⁾

5. It should, however, be pointed out that measures of density constitute only one aspect of the population pressure in relation to resources and the potentialities of economic development. The limitation of the measure remains even when allowances are made for arable land and agricultural population.

6. It is estimated that about 90 per cent of the Europeans in Africa live in the Southern and South-central part of the region, including Rhodesia, Angola, South Africa and Mozambique. According to the 1960 census of South Africa, there were about 3 million Europeans who constituted almost 20 per cent of the total population in the Republic of South Africa. Around 1960, there were also 73,000 Europeans in South West Africa, 300,000 in Rhodesia and Nyassaland. They all formed 5 per cent of the total population. The two large Portuguese territories together had 150,000 Europeans. Altogether, there were not more than half million European in Southern and Central Africa in 1960. Meanwhile, there were less than another half million scattered in all other African countries in Africa, south of the Sahara, which constituted less than one half of one per cent of the total population in west and east Africa sub-regions in 1960.⁽²⁾

There were about one million South Asians in African countries, about half of them are in South Africa, where they constitute 3 per cent of the total population in 1960. Also, nearly 3 per cent of the population in Kenya are South Asians. The South Asians are very well spread in some other African countries, south of the Sahara especially in the south and east, but in lesser proportion than in South Africa and Kenya.⁽³⁾

7. The highest crude birth rate and death rate among the world regions during 1960-1966 are recorded in Africa, with 46

(1) ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1953.

(2) Frank Lorimer et al in Robert A. Lystad, (ed.).

(3) **The African World**, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., London, 1965.

per 1,000 population for birth rate and 23 per 1,000 for death rate as against 34 and 16 per 1,000 respectively for the world averages. The estimates for 1965/1970 is 46.7 for birth rate and 21.2 for death rate for all Africa as against 33.8 and 14.0 for the whole world respectively.⁽¹⁾

8. With high and constant fertility, without any slight tendency for declining in the near future and the decline of infant mortality, Africa is characterized with a high proportion of children under 15 years of age, forming about 43 per cent, on the average of the total population. Population in working age groups (15-59) constitutes about 53 per cent and almost 4 per cent are in the age (60 +) and consequently Africa has a high dependency ratio which places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working age population, lowering the per capita income and deteriorating the already very low standard of living.

9. Meanwhile, large numbers of children should be provided with at least basic education, public health facilities and housing for the accommodation of big size families. These social services need capital investments which are extracted from funds allocated for economic development. Also, the expectation of employment will be raised and job opportunities will not be quite enough to all partially educated persons and the increasing number of school leavers. Consequently the number of unemployed and underemployed persons will be increasing.

10. Another obvious characteristic of African population is the rapid urbanization, where the concept of the modern city is relatively new to most African countries. The rate of urban growth in Africa during these last two decades is higher than any other part in the world. It is projected that almost one in five Africans would be living in towns of 20,000 or more inhabitants by 1980. The degree of urbanization and the growth rate of urban population in Africa vary considerably from country to country and from one sub-region to another.

(1) UN world population prospects 1965-88 as assessed in 1968.

Many African countries have more than half of their urban population in the principal or capital city, which is due mainly, to the development of one major centre to serve administrative and other business interests of the majority of the country's population.

II. Availability of Demographic Data :

11. For a long time there has been fairly complete information on the European population of most dependent territories in Africa. Types of data obtained in population censuses of the European population in various African countries usually covered the Asian populations where they are numerically important, but generally data for Asians were less complete than for Europeans.

12. The first population census in Africa was undertaken in Egypt (UAR) in 1882 which was a mere counting of people in different provinces. The actual Egyptian complete census per say was executed in 1897 and then decennial censuses were regular in subsequent years. The first population census was taken in Algeria during the second half of the nineteenth century and further decennial censuses continued on. Morocco took her first census in 1921. In both Algeria and Morocco the population was divided into Europeans and Moslems (Africans) with more details for the European populations. The first experience of Libya in the field of population censuses was in 1936. Censuses were taken in some Southern African countries in 1904. Prior to 1936, however, the figures for Africans in these censuses were based on estimates by local officials.

13. There were field enumerations of the total population of Uganda in 1931, in Angola and Mozambique in 1940. The French-speaking African countries have good experience in large scale national and regional demographic inquiries.⁽¹⁾ National sample surveys were used also, as a substitute to a complete enumeration in both the Sudan in 1955/56 and in the UAR for an intercensal enumeration in 1966.

(1) Frank Lorimer et al, *Op cit.*

14. Only 62 per cent of the African population is covered by a regular census and some countries still depend on administrative enumerations as their main source of demographic data.⁽¹⁾ According to an information sheet distributed in the Sixth African Statistician Conference, many African countries undertook their last population census during the period 1965-1969. Other countries are planning to have their censuses during the period 1970-1974, with the exception of Ethiopia and Somalia which neither took nor planning to take any population census. In the Sudan also, there was no complete enumeration carried out, but a national sample survey was a substitute to a complete enumeration in 1955/56, and there is no confirmed information of planning for a census in the 1970's. In general, we may say that only somewhat less than 70 per cent of the total population in Africa is covered by nation wide population enquiry since 1958 to date.

15. Sampling surveys were used successfully in some African countries to secure demographic data on a regional or national basis. Sampling schemes, however, are not useful for the study of some of the demographic social and economic characteristics of the population. This problem has been overcome in a number of instances by recording the primary data (e.g. total numbers, sex, employment status etc), by means of a complete census-type inquiry, and other more details statistics (ages, fertility, literacy, length of residence, etc.) by sampling survey. Procedures of this kind have been used in East Africa, Nigeria and UAR.

16. Both the population census and vital statistics are tremendously important in order to build up a demographic picture of a country as it moves in time and a base line for projecting the future characteristics upon which the economic and social planning depends. Meantime, the systematic appraisal and analysis of the demographic data is difficult in the absence of vital statistics.

17. Despite this well known fact, very few African countries keep vital statistics records for all parts of their countries.

(1) Seminar on Application of Demographic Data, June, 1969.
E/CN. 14/457, E/CN. 14/POP/10; E/CN. 14 CAS. 619.

But a good number of them have a registration system, by some way or another to the capital city and some urban areas. Historically, some African countries started their vital statistics registration systems early in the first two decades of the twentieth century e.g. Uganda in 1904 and Egypt (UAR) in 1912. At the beginning, some of these records had a partial coverage and were very far away from completeness, but by the passage of time, a lot of improvements were introduced and most of these early initiated records are now fairly complete.

18. It is now a usual experience for some African countries to collect some vital events e.g. births and deaths which occurred during a specific period, by questions asked in a census-type inquiry. Also, fertility information may be obtained in the census by inquiring about the children ever born to a married woman or any other woman exposed to the risk of child bearing. It is a usual experience in many African countries that current births or deaths may be misreported because of the incorrectly recognition of the prescribed reference period and liable also to the errors of omission.

19. Establishment of comprehensive systems of vital registration in countries where they are lacking and extension and improvement of the functioning of such systems where they already exist are indispensable requirements for satisfactory development of demographic statistics in Africa and will fill an existing gap in the required statistical data for social and economic development plans. Despite the incomplete or lacking in quality, demographic data available for Africa, nevertheless it is probable to obtain a fairly comprehensive picture of the general demographic situation in the region.

III. Density of Population

20. The population for total Africa is estimated at 355 million by mid 1970. Almost 27 per cent of the African population is found in North Africa (86,602) thousands; 31.3 per cent in West Africa (111,271) thousands; 10.1 per cent in Central Africa (35,889) thousands; 27.6 per cent in East Africa (97,880)

thousands; and about 4.0 per cent in the Southern African region (22,832).⁽¹⁾

The overall population density in Africa is low, almost 12 persons per square kilometer in 1970. This measure, however has little meaning when it is considered that the continent encompassed vast areas which are uninhabitable deserts and most of the remaining land is agriculturally poor. The density in arable land was estimated in 1966 at 135 persons per square Kilometer, with wide diversity between African countries. The highest density was recorded in the UAR (1,108), followed by Angola (573) and Kenya (552) persons per square Kilometer of arable land. With few exception the sparsely populated arable land is found in the Central and West African countries, where the density of population in arable land lies between 23 in the Central African Republic to 399 in Mauritania per square Kilometer.⁽²⁾

In general, the urban and coastal areas are the most densely populated, as well as areas near water resources and mineral deposits.

21. The terms «underpopulation» and «overpopulation» imply respectively, inadequate and over-adequate number of inhabitants in the area. But those terms are essentially relative, and not specifically defined. William Allan in his book, «**The African Husbandman**», introduced his new concept of «Critical Density of Population», (CDP), which he defined as «the human carrying capacity of an area in relation to a given land use system, expressed in terms of population per square mile; it is the maximum population density which a system is capable of supporting permanently in that environment without damage to the land.»⁽³⁾

(1) UN; Population Division, World Population Prospects (Preliminary Memograph) as assessed in 1969 UN, New York, 1969.

(2) UNECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1963

(3) Allan, W., **The African Husbandman**, Oliver and Boyd, London. 1965 p. 89.

22. Modern plant breeding, the application of fertilizers, and the introducing of mechanization in agriculture, have resulted in a smaller number of people on the land to produce for a larger number of non-producer. The logical effect is to decrease the land requirement per person, making the (CDP) higher than would otherwise be the case. Agricultural output, both in quality and quantity can probably be improved so that more will be obtained from each acre under cultivation.

23. There is also, the influx of rural population into the towns seeking employment, especially in secondary industry and the services. This obviously forms the increasing rate of growth of the urban population, decreasing the actual number of rural people left behind. The continuous movement into the towns aggravates the situation so that many towns in Africa now have more inhabitants than they can support or regularly employ.

24. It is tremendously important and of real interest to estimate the (CDP) density measurement for individual African countries and for the subregions which requires the availability of fairly accurate data of the land under cultivation, land use system, social structure and crop rotation... etc. beside the demographic statistics in rural areas and the internal migration movement within the country. Certainly, this is one of the research areas which demographers should consider in their studies of population densities.

IV. Factors of Demographic Change in Africa

A. *Fertility* :

25. Despite the deficiencies in vital statistics data in most of the African countries, available fertility accurate data indicate that the fertility rates are at present, among indigenous population, the highest in the world. The birth rates generally range from 35 in Gabon to 62 in Guinea per 1,000 population. Birth rate in most of the countries lies between 43 and 49 with an average of 46 per thousand and the gross reproduction rate (GRR) is 3.0 as estimated by the United Nations during 1960-1966.⁽¹⁾ Estimate of birth rate in Africa for the period

(1) UN ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, p. 68, Addis Ababa, 1968.

1965/70 is 46.7 per thousand population as against 33.8 for the whole world.⁽¹⁾

26. Measures of fertility vary considerably among African subregions and countries. It is reported that countries of the West African sub-region have the highest fertility rates, with an average birth rate of 54 per 1,000 and the GRR 3.4 around 1965. The lowest level of fertility was recorded for Central Africa with an average birth rate of 43 per thousand and GRR 2.3. The sub-regions are generally homogeneous in regard to fertility measures, although there are some countries that do not confirm to the average pattern within a sub-region.

27. Differential fertility is similar in Africa to the other parts of the world as demonstrated by many demographers. Generally, fertility has been shown to be higher in the rural than in the urban areas in Africa with few exceptions e.g. a study of fertility differential in UAR indicated higher fertility rates in urban areas than in rural areas.⁽²⁾ In this study and in other fertility studies in some African countries it was shown that there is an inverse relationship between the educational attainment and the socio-economic status of the couples and their levels of fertility.

28. Since the fertility pattern depends on cultural values and social customs; accelerated economic development; national scale educational progress, which generally speaking will not change in a short period, it seems unlikely that there will be a notable change in the levels of fertility in the next two decades in most African countries unless a population policy and family planning programme will be adopted as an integrated part of the national economic development plans.

B. *Nuptiality* :

29. Marriage is an important institution in all tribal societies, but its definition varies among tribes in different African

(1) UN, World Population Prospects, 1965-1980 as Assessed in 1968

(2) A.M. Zikry, «Fertility Differentials of the UAR Women», UN World Population Conference, Belgrade, 1965 Vol. II, p. 179.

countries and might even vary among tribes and regions in the same country. To understand the tribal African marriage we have to think of it as a development process. ⁽¹⁾ This complicates the reporting of marriages in the census inquiries, because the census may be taken at any moment of marriage development. The collection and analysis of data on marriage in censuses and large scale inquiries involve different problems of definitions.

30. African women generally marry at fairly early ages. Data on the age at first marriage should be used with cautious of the ambiguities in the definition of marriage and the misstatement of the current age and the age at first marriage.

31. Pologamy is, in principle, still existing and recognized in most African countries, but its percentage varies considerably from one country to another and is higher in tribal and rural communities than in urban areas and it varies also among socio-economic strata of the population, the higher the socio-economic status, the less frequent is polygamous marriage. ⁽²⁾ The highest rate of polygamy are recorded in West Africa, with Guinea recording having the highest percentage (37 per cent of her married man had more than one wife in 1954-55). With the exception of non African, the percentage of husbands who had more than one wife during 1950—1960 was 25 per cent on the average. ⁽³⁾

32. Instability of marriage has often accompanied the disruption of the tribal cohesiveness, intercourse between tribes and urbanization which created new values and new ways of life. Imbalance in the numbers of men and women in cities has festered the prevalence of free unions and a high frequency of divorce or separation in the urban areas.

(1) Radcliff-Brown, R.A., and D. Forde, *African System of Kindship and Marriage*, London, Oxford University Press, 1950.

(2) G. Wuelker, «Effects of social and Family Patterns on the Population Increase in Togo» UN, World Population Conference 1965, Vol. II., P. 179.

(3) *Demographic Handbook for Africa*.

33. New legal forms of marriages, the civil and religious marriages are becoming increasingly important in most African countries, but regular statistical data on marriages and divorces are very rare and incomplete which is due to the non-existence of the marriage and divorce registration system in most African countries.

C . *Mortality.*

34. The infant mortality and childhood mortality rates as well as general mortality rates are higher in Africa more than any other region in the world. The infant mortality rates range between 100—225 per 1000 children born alive and before they reach their first year of life, with the exception of Cameroon and Senegal (less than 100), and Gabon and Zambia (above 225). The average general death rates range between 20—25 per 1,000 population. The life expectancy ranges from 27 in Mali and Guinea to 50 years or more in UAR, Morocco, Reunion and Mauritius. For Africa as a whole, the average death rate was estimated at 23 per 1,000 and the life expectancy at birth 41 during 1960—1966 as against the world average death rate of 16 per 1,000 population. ⁽¹⁾ The death rate is estimated for 1965/70 at 21.2 per thousand population for Africa as against 14.0 per 1,000 for the world. ⁽²⁾

35. The past two decades constitute a period of rapid declines in mortality in many of the African countries for which data are available, because of the low cost but effective medicine imported from abroad and the assistance of the WHO. Decline of mortality is also due to the national public health programme to which all African countries give priority and their utmost consideration during the allocation of their national budget among different units of the social service sector. The drop of the death rate, especially in infant mortality rate in African countries has its effect on the increase of the expectation of life at birth for both sexes. The expectation of life at birth was 40

(1) R.K. Som, «Some Demographic Indicators for Africa», *The Population of Tropical Africa*, edited by J.C. Caldwell and C. Okonjo, 1968, p. 195.

(2) UN World Population Prospects, 1965—1985 as assessed in 1968.

years as estimated during the period 1960—1966 for all Africa.⁽¹⁾ The estimated is 43.3 on the average for 1965/70 as against the world average 53.1.⁽²⁾

36. For all African countries for which mortality rates are available for sex and age groups, they are in general, higher for males than for females except in the UAR, (1960), Upper Volta (1960—61) and the non-white population of South West Africa (1960). The age-specific death rates for the African countries, usually follow the normal pattern of mortality, with high rates at birth, falling to the lowest at the age group 10—14 and then rise gradually reaching the highest level at the oldest age group.⁽³⁾ Mortality rates are correlated with social class. This is because of the difference in socio-economic status and medical care.

D. *Migration* :

37. There has been a neglect of migration as a major factor in demographic change in most population studies, which might be due to lack of interest, scarcity of data and unvalidity of migration measures used.

38. Nevertheless, the analysis of migration as an indicator of demographic as well as economic and social imbalance could be made by estimating net migration gains and losses during intervals between censuses by sex-age group according to place of birth and/or (place of origin), and place of residence during the census period. Classification of population by tribal affiliations could also be used for migration studies.

39. International migration is influenced by the economic, social and political conditions in the countries of origins. Economic conditions particularly those relating to supply and demand at labour are the major factor which determines the direction volume of migration and the quality of migrants according to

(1) UN ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, p. 95, 1968.

(2) UN, World Population Prospects, 1965-85, as Assessed in 1968.

(3) UN ECA, Demographic Handbook for Africa, p. 95, 1968.

the demand of the country of destination. The need of foreign skilled labour should be met by policies favouring selection immigration. African countries may start negotiations with other neighbouring African countries to formulate bilateral agreements for the exchange of skilled labourers and technical and professional personnel. This may be less in labour-unit cost than for the non-Africans. The assimilation and acculturation of African migrants will be easier than those of the expatriates derived out of the African continent.

40. West Africa, from Senegal to Cameroon is probably the most characterized by greater seasonal migration in Africa. From inland countries like Mali, Upper Volta and Niger, and from the northern part of Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria, male migrants move generally in a southward direction during the dry season, from October until April, to more developed rural and urban areas, and then return back home to cultivate in their own forms. Normal population censuses do not provide any data on the annual movements in terms of their patterns and timing. Some indicators of the volume of migrants may be given in a de facto census during the absence of the migrants ⁽¹⁾

41. Movements associated with rural-urban migration are a more important feature of the mobility that has developed in most African countries during the colonial era. People are increasingly, moving from rural areas to expanding urban centers. Although Africa is the least urbanized region of the world's major regions (around 13 per cent in the average, for towns of 20,000 and more population), the growth rate of urban population is one of the highest, 5.4 per cent annually as against the world rate of 3.2 per cent. One of the most pressing problems currently facing many African countries is the drift migrations from rural to urban areas with its social and economic implications.

42. Factors affecting rural-urban migration are usually, categorized into push and pull factors, but briefly, they may be

(1) R.M. Prothero, «Migration in Tropical Africa» in *The Population of Tropical Africa* edited by J.C. Caldwell and C. Okonjo, 1968, pp. 250—263.

classified into two major categories : 1) economic factors; such as poverty due to pressure of population on the cultivated land; low standard of living and underemployment in rural areas etc.; 2) social and psychological factors e.g. the desire to break away from the constraints of traditional social organization to a more social freedom in towns; attractive of the urban areas which offer or seem to offer to the country man more advantages and amenities that are not available in rural areas.

43. African countries vary considerably in their rate of urbanization. In 1960 almost 25 per cent of the total population of North Africa lived in towns or cities of 20,000 and more; and 18 per cent lived in cities with 100,000 and more population. Available data suggest that the country with the highest percentage in towns (20,000 or more) is the UAR (38.2), followed by Algeria (26.5).

The proportion of the population living in towns or cities with 20,000 and more inhabitants in the other sub-regions were as follows in 1960: West Africa (12 per cent), Central Africa (8 per cent); East Africa (5 per cent). South Africa urban population constitute 35.1 per cent of its total population and Rhodesia's 15.0 per cent in 1960. Angola and Mozambique each has one city of more than 100,000 inhabitants.⁽¹⁾

44. It is the large cities which creates the biggest problems and it is the localities which are growing faster than small and medium towns. The growth of localities having more than 100,000 inhabitants is 8.6 per cent annually, more than four times the annual rate of population growth in Africa between 1950 and 1960. ⁽²⁾

45. The present rate of urban growth and the current trends of rural urban migration show prospects of a rapidly accelerating rate of growth of urban population and expansion of urban localities. This rapid growth is unhealthy and had made it impossible to keep pace with the basic needs of the new urban

(1) UN ECA, E/CN. 14/CAS. 613, Addis Ababa, 29 July 1968.

(2) Op. cit.

dwellers for jobs, housing and other amenities. Unemployment and underemployment will rise and the standard of living in towns and cities will be lower and in general, the social milieu will get deteriorated.

46. The movements of refugees across the borders from one African country to another, mostly for political reasons, become very normal in Africa and their numbers are in a continuous increase. The refugees movements occurred in Congo (Kinshasa) the Sudan and from Rwanda, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa concentrating mostly in East Africa, particularly in Uganda, and to a lesser extent in some West African countries. No accurate counts for those refugees are available.

V. Population Structure

47. The sex and age distributions of a population are useful as indicators of its manpower potential. It is also of considerable importance to development planning in general, for they provide measures of the dependency load, consumption need and social requirements in the present as well as the future, beside the estimates of the manpower supply and demand for all sectors of the economy.

48. The age composition is, on one hand, the product of past fertility, mortality, and migration trends, and on the other hand, it influences, to a certain extent, the natural increase of the population. The effect of mortality on the age composition is very small, relatively to the effect of fertility and the external migration in the case of some African countries. With constant and high fertility the age pyramid in African countries has a wide base, but tapers off rapidly.

49. The population of African countries, similar to other developing countries is a young population, which is characterized with a high percentage of children under 15 years of age constituting around 43 per cent on the average, of the total population. This high proportion of children means heavy dependency load. The average dependency ratio in Africa is about 80 per cent, whereas it is in the developed countries around 60 per cent.

50. Females generally outnumber males in the total indigenous population of Africa. The countries where males are clearly higher than females are Libya, Sudan, UAR, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Angola.

Sex-ratios seem generally lowest in the Central and Eastern African sub-regions. The lowest sex-ratios are recorded for Gabon, Rawanda, Republic of Congo, Chad, Malawi and Lesotho. Assuming equal degree of accuracy for census reporting, these lowest sex-ratios are due to the higher migration rates of males over females to the neighbouring countries with better employment opportunities. For most African countries the sex ratios are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. ⁽¹⁾

The average percentage of population in the working age group is 53 and of the old age group is about 4 per cent; with a slight difference from this pattern in some few individual countries which may be due to count inaccuracy. It is expected that due to steady high and constant fertility these proportions will reach 45 per cent, 52.0 per cent and 3.0 per cent in 1985 for (0—14 years), (15—64 years) and (65 years and over) respectively. ⁽²⁾

VI. Economically Active Population

51. Variation in male activity rates are comparatively small. 56.8 per cent of males in Africa are economically active as against the world average of 58.4 per cent. On the other hand, participation rate for females vary over a wide range and on the average only 14.5 per cent of African females were recorded as economically active, as against the world average of 27.2 per cent ⁽³⁾. The activity rates for younger ages (10—14), and the older age groups (65 and over), typical to other developing areas of the world are generally higher (21.7 and 64.9 respectively) for the indigenous population than the corresponding rates for the non-indigenous (3.5 of 10—14 and 57.5 per cent for 65

(1) UN ECA, *Demographic Handbook for Africa*, 1968, p. 27.

(2) UN, *World Population Prospects, 1965—1985, As Assessed in 1968*.

(3) UN ECA, *Economic Bulletin for Africa*, Vol. 5 Jan. 1965, p. 36.

and over).⁽¹⁾ The male activity rates for the age-groups (19—64) are not different in Africa from the general pattern in developed countries and they ranged from 90 per cent in early ages, reach the peak (97) at the ages 35—44, then they drop back to 90 per cent at the old ages (55—64).

52. It is likely that there will be changes in the activity rates for both sexes in the coming two decades, resulting from factors which bring about social and economic development, viz., spread of education for both sexes; introduction of social security and retirement measures; the change role of women; etc. The expansion of education will reduce the activity rates of the younger age groups, irrespectives of sex. Similarly, the introduction of measures inducing early retirement will decrease the activity rates of the older age groups. However the effect of the changing role of women on their economic activity cannot be easily predicted since social factors are involved which vary from culture to culture in Africa. It depends also on the rate of economic growth, the expansion of industrialization, the concomitant and healthy urbanization and, as a result, the increase of job opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economics.

53. As indicated by number of persons employed, agriculture is the most important sector in Africa. The proportion engaged in agriculture exceeds 60 per cent of the total economically active in most African countries. The highest percentage of the total labour force working in agriculture is recorded for Nigeria (96 per cent) and the lowest is found in Liberia (36 per cent).⁽²⁾

The highest proportion of wage and salary earners are in North Africa, where the proportion ranges from 34 per cent in Morocco to 51 per cent of the total economically active in Tunisia. In West Africa where the percentage of salaried workers are the lowest in Africa, the range is 4 per cent in Nigeria to 33 per cent in Liberia.⁽³⁾

(1) UN, *Demographic Aspects of Manpower*, New York, 1962.

(2) UNECA, *Demographic Handbook for Africa*, pp. 113—116.

54. Among the characteristic features of employment in Africa are the following : i) important groups in the population are not fully participating in the development projects at the local level e.g., youth, women, refugees. Persons in these categories may not be actively seeking work because suitable work does not appear to be available for them, but this is a real wastage of the available resources; ii) the shortage of employment opportunities in general in relation to the supply of manpower is another problem facing African countries, which requires long-term manpower planning, and population policy and programme should be integrated in the overall economic development plans. The percentage of employment and unemployment is increasing in most African countries as a result of the increase of the annual rate of population growth which does not keep pace with the increase of economic growth; iii) there is in general, a serious shortage of trained personnel, meanwhile a number of trained persons cannot find full and productive employment in fields for which they are trained. This needs first, accelerating the training programmes, secondly, coordination between educational planning and manpower planning and finally proper utilization of the available trained human resources.

VII. Population Growth and Social and Economic Development

55. Accelerating population growth in Africa may aggravate the problem of capital shortage, which is one of the most important obstacles to economic development in African countries. The higher the population growth, the greater the proportion of capital consumed in the consumption goods and the provision of social services to the growing population and the less the proportion invested for production.

56. It is true that by increasing the cash income through commercializing agriculture, industrialization and proper utilization of available natural human resources, the large population may be advantageous in the long run, but still it puts strains upon the country's economy in the absence of sufficient capital for investment and skilled manpower. For efficient economic growth there should be a balance between population growth in one hand and natural and human resources at a given level of

technology at the other hand of the equation. It is not the quantity of population but the quality which is imperative for production. The material capital and the human capital are the two most important factors for economic development.

57. For most of the African countries it is difficult, under the present state of affairs of high rate of population growth, to save from their meagre national income to permit economic development to proceed at a satisfactory pace. The high birth rate and the general attitude to raise big size family in African countries create a heavy load of dependency over the working population and reduce their share of savings and investment for economic development.

58. The low level of literacy and the low proportion of school enrolment is very pronounced in most African countries. This is due to the high birth rate, high population growth rate and consequently, low per capita income and inadequate government facilities for education. There is in effect, a serious competition between population growth and educational development. In some African countries the absolute number of illiterates and undereducated persons is increasing, despite the increasing numbers of enrolment and graduates from schools at different levels of educational attainment.

59. The age and sex structure of the population, which are mostly affected by the levels of fertility, determines the proportion of population which are of working age and hence helps to determine the size of the potential labour force. According to the prevailed high fertility in African countries the size of the labour force is undergoing rapid growth and this creates the need for the creation of jobs. This requires the increase of the annual growth of employment to keep pace with the growth in labour force. There is however, ample evidence that the rates of economic growth in most African countries is too low to absorb the increasingly large numbers of persons who are seeking employment. This will accelerate the percentage of unemployment and underemployment. Some African countries are committed to the social target of full employment to absorb all available manpower during their economic development plan period. However,

this goal is unattained in any African country and the growing size of unemployment is an evidence of the inability of the economy to absorb all the available labour force.

60. The supply of labour substantially exceeds the demand in most African countries, meanwhile there is a great demand for some categories of skilled and technical workers. This necessitate the distinction between the educational demand of the population and the economic need for specific educated people. There should be a coordination between the manpower planning and the educational planning and both of them should be an integral part of the overall economic development plan.

61. There is an interchangeable relationship between economic growth and population growth. The effect of the growth in per capita product on the growth rate and structure of population has been demonstrated by some demographers. An increase in the national income may be accompanied by either falling birth rates as occurred in Western Europe and Northern America in the first decades of the century and in Japan and Eastern Europe since the Second World War, or by rising birth rates as in some European countries, North America and Oceania during and after the 2nd World War. Meanwhile, higher per capita income will raise the nutritional standards, thus reducing death rates.

62. However, as can be observed in many developing countries in the last twenty five years, death rates fell very considerably with a virtually unchanged per capita product. Changes in health conditions affect mortality, independent of economic growth. There are some social and cultural factors which affect fertility over and beyond the direct effects of increasing per capita product and the associated changes in economic structure.

VIII. Population Policy and Programme :

63. The Conference of African Planners, meeting in Addis Ababa in 1967, directed the attention of African governments to the need for evolving population policies. The regional meeting on « Technical and Social Problems of Urbanization »,

recommended in 1969, that the attention of Africa planners should be drawn to the need of African countries to adopt individual population policies in order to reduce the effects of rapid rates of growth of total and urban population. The seminar on the « application of Demographic Data and Analysis to Development Planning », held in Addis Ababa, June 1969, recommended not only that the population factor be an integral part of the development process, but also whenever necessary family planning be used to supplement economic factors aimed at raising the level of the welfare of the people.

64. It should be emphasized that the population policy does not mean only a programme of family planning or birth control. It simply means the government declaration of her measures and attitudes towards the population growth and other demographic trends existing in the country and their effect on the economic development and consequently, on the welfare and the anticipated standard of living of her people. Next step to this declaration would be the initiation of a national population commission constituted of demographers, statisticians, social scientists, medical doctors and some key political personnel who are interested in population problems. The major function of this commission is to prepare analytical studies in current population problems and recommend to the government plan of actions for dealing with these problems.

65. To date, from African countries, UAR, Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya and Ghana have official population policies whose growth by reducing fertility through family planning. In Nigeria a national population policy is in a process. The Ghanaian policy aims at : reducing fertility, morbidity and mortality; control of internal migration, control of immigration from abroad according to the need of the country. Implementation of the policy on reduction of fertility is proposed through financial «disincentives», enlightenment of the individual, family planning clinics and similar. This latter activity is being carried out by the «Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana» working in close cooperation with the Government.

The family planning programme in Morocco is one of the priorities in the 5-year development plan 1968-72, its demog-

raphic objective is the reduction of the crude birth rate by 10 percent by 1972. For the implementation of family planning in Tunisia a complete organization was created with all the required services : health, communication and diffusion, training, research and evaluation. Those activities are carried out by government agencies and supported financially by Ford Foundation and the Population Council. In the U. A. R. the « Supreme Council for Family Planning » was created in 1965. A ministerial Committee adopted a ten - year programme aiming at a reduction of the crude birth rate to 30 per 1,000 and consequently, the annual natural increase to 1.7 per cent by 1978. In 1967 the Government of Kenya has inaugurated a family planning service aimed at reducing the rate of population growth. Family planning activities are carried by the Government and private voluntary agencies⁽¹⁾.

66. Evaluation is an essential tool for assessment and further improvement of existing family planning programme. Compilation and analysis of statistics of the number of persons accepting methods of contraception and their characteristics are essential for the evaluation of the degree of response to the programme and for figuring out the major causes for non-response. The use of the family planning clinic card such as the one developed by the Kenya Family Planning Programme may be applicable for this purpose⁽²⁾. The overall evaluation of the programme on the national level of fertility is undertaken through the fertility surveys.

67. The majority of African countries do not have any population policy or programme. Some of them adopt a pro-natalist policy, e.g. Cameroon, whose government is against any

(1) UN. ECA, Draft Report of the Working Group on Fertility Studies and Evaluation of Population Programmes, Addis Ababa 26 - 30 Jan. 1970, pp. 3 - 12.

(2) For further information concerning the processing and analysis, of family planning data, consult, Ross Stephen and Watson, **A Handbook for Service Statistics in Family Planning Programme**, Population Council, N. Y.

policy for family planning or birth control until her population reaches 15 million. On the contrary, there exist economic and social incentives to encourage population growth such as, paid maternity leave, children's allowances up to a maximum of six children, etc. Other African countries are very well concerned with the rapid rate of urbanization growth and the concentration of urban population in the capital cities and consequently the increasing amount of unemployment. As an example of these measures is the Senegal's programme of population redistribution and settlement in new lands and Zambia's programme for encouraging the surplus urban dweller to return back to rural and mining areas.

IX. Summary and Conclusion :

68. A number of conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing paragraphs :

(1) Demographic statistics in most African countries are still inadequate and unreliable. Greater efforts and special considerations should be given by the African governments for the collection, processing and analysis of demographic data. Particular emphasis should be put on the importance of the initiation and the improvement of the vital registration system.

(2) One of the demographic features of the African continent is the relatively low population densities in many countries, except only in few areas. In general there is no pressure on the land. The reliability of the population density as a measure of population pressure has been questioned.

(3) Africa has the lowest degree of urbanization among all regions of the world, but her average rate of urbanization growth is the highest. This requires a policy and a programme for population redistribution, improving the rural milieu and decentralization of industries.

(4) It is clear from available data that levels of fertility are very high in all African countries. Due to the appreciable efforts being made by all African governments and the United Nations agencies for improving the health conditions and nutrition for the majority of African population, the mortality rates

are dropping down rapidly and likely to decline further which will result in a higher rate of population growth and more government expenditures on social overheads which will decrease the share of proper economic development in the available resources.

(5) High proportion of young population, as consequence of constant and high fertility, results in high dependency ratio and heavy load on the working population. The high rate of population growth is responsible for the big supply of labour force which overweights the labour market demand. Meanwhile, there is a shortage of trained and skilled labourers and a heavy reliance on expatriates especially for the technical and professional jobs.

(6) Demographic factors and their effects on economic and social development need to be given more attention in the plans of African countries. Consideration of these factors is of utmost importance for its direct effect on production through the supply of manpower requirements and on the consumption levels. They are also essential for educational planning, health and social services and trade development etc.

(7) Population trends should be the subject of a deliberate and comprehensive policy based on national and regional demographic surveys and studies, in countries seeking to raise the standard of living of their people through social and economic planning.

(8) In view of the importance of population growth and its effect on economic growth, some African countries had adopted policies for encouraging population limitation and had inaugurated family planning programmes for the implementation of these policies. Other countries have not yet formulated any population policies aiming at controlling their high birth rates, on the contrary some of them are in favour of big size families.