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Summary Report
On the mission to the Central Statistical Organization
in Qatar
From 6 - 14 January 1987

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia.

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The Mission's Objective:

Upon the request of the Central Statistical Organization in Qatar (CSO) for the adviser's assistance in preparing a manpower plan for Qatar, the adviser arrived at Doha, capital of Qatar, on January 6, 1987, to find out that the mission's objective, as viewed by CSO's director and assistants, consists of:

(a) Determination of data, forms, tables, modes of analysis, ... etc., needed to establish a manpower plan, and

(b) Preparation of 5-year manpower plans, for the next 20 years, in the light of Qatar's present conditions and available facilities, including the data and information expected from the 1986 Population and Housing Census, now being processed and analyzed.

Adviser's Study and Findings:

1. Planning has not been adopted before in Qatar. The country has neither economic nor social plans. In fact, economic activities in Qatar are performed mostly by the private sector, and, moreover, future-oriented thinking is rather limited in all sectors (gov't, public, private and mixed). This is especially true at present when oil prices, and consequently all economic and Social activities, are unstable and their future trends and developments are anybody's guess.

Since demand for labour is a derived demand, this situation greatly hinders the possibility, and usefulness, of attempts to project future labour demand.

2. Approximately 85% of Qatar's total labour force are expatriates. This increases the seriousness of the inability to project future labour demand.

3. CSO has limited cadres and facilities at its disposal, and though most of its cadres may be competent and well qualified in the field of statistics, they seem to have no previous experience in planning. This is not surprising, since it is not common or even regular for statistical organs in a country to undertake planning for that country.

4. On the supply side, time series for almost all data-educational data being the main exception - either do not exist at all, or cover only short periods that do not extend beyond 3-4 years. Consequently, long-term projections of labour supply also become inaccurate and impractical.

5. Scientific studies on the labour market in Qatar (factors affecting entrance to the market or separation from it, occupational changes in its structure, occupational, social and geographical mobility ... etc.) are almost completely missing.

Recommendations:

1. In the light of the above findings, comprehensive, long-term manpower planning for Qatar is recommended to be postponed for the time-being.

2. Partial manpower planning, for only qualified and highly-skilled labour, and may be for few 'effective' economic and/or social activities, may be attempted instead, with the following objectives in mind:

(a) Creation of awareness of the importance of manpower planning and the benefits individuals, organizations, and sectors may gain by its adoption (in addition to those expected at the national level).

(b) Training officials and new cadres in thinking ahead, undertaking objective studies, analyzing attained information in a more comprehensive context, suggesting policies and procedures for action, making decisions, following-up performances...etc.

(c) Making full use of the presently-limited available resources to CSO, and prepare the way for the time when comprehensive planning can be undertaken with a fair chance of success.

3. If the recommendation for partial manpower planning is accepted, then gradualism has to be its main feature. At the start, it covers few occupations and few activities chosen according to specific criteria (e.g. occupations with shortages and constitute bottlenecks in the country's path to progress and development, or those requiring long preparation and the need for them has to be known well in advance ... etc; activities with forward and/or backward effects, with significant portion of the total labour force, of social priority ...etc). Later, as experience gained and acceptance is wide spread, more and more occupations and/or activities are added till a comprehensive manpower plan with full coverage becomes a reality within 3-5 years.

4. Practical steps to start with, such as the following, were pointed out:

(a) Strengthening of CSO and the establishment of appropriate planning units within it (if it is going to be assigned the function of preparing a manpower plan), and within the various ministries, organizations, and establishments,

(b) Choice of activities and occupations to be covered,

(c) Undertaking of studies on factors affecting labour market operations,

(d) Establishing correspondance between occupational classifications and the content of various educational levels and specializations.

5. The importance of setting up a follow-up machinery and procedures is highly emphasized.

6. Some of the more commonly used methods and techniques for estimating and projecting labour supply and demand, and a statement of the main data and studies they may require, were included.