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7 OCTOBER 1984

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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DIVISION
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION UNIT

REPORT 1 /
ON MISSION TO THE ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT
SHARJAH EMIRATE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
23 - 30 September 1984

by

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1 / The opinions expressed in this report are those of the Adviser and not necessarily those of ECWA.

SUMMARY

1. Upon the request of the Economic Department (ED), Sharjah Emirate, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Adviser undertook a one-week mission (23-30 September 1984) to advise the ED on: (1) Evaluating the activities of the Division of Planning, Research and Statistics (DPRS), attached to the ED; (2) identifying measures to be undertaken in order to develop the work of ED and to implement its terms of reference, specially those related to development planning; and, (3) identifying ways and means of extending ECWA's technical assistance to ED.
2. The ED was established in April-May 1981. Since then, it has issued several statistical publications. Analytical texts on the economy of the Emirate were published as introductions to the respective chapters of the annual publication "Sharjah's Statistics". Some data on private companies, mainly in the fields of industry and insurance, were collected by direct inquiries. However, no efforts have been made to estimate such aggregate as GDP or capital formation at the Emirate's level. Moreover, there is scope for considerably enriching the contents of the publication, relying on data estimated by the federal ministries at the level of individual Emirates.
3. The DPRS has only four staff members. The Chief of Division is holder of a Ph.D. degree, whereas the others are university graduates. All staff members of DPRS are expatriates.
4. Bearing in mind such constraints as the size of the Division, non-availability of clerical staff, the use of conventional computing equipment and the heavy workload at lower levels, the outputs of the Division should be considered satisfactory. However, these constraints, combined with the limited experience in the field of development planning cannot enable the ED to develop the work of DPRS significantly.
5. Two major terms of reference of ED were not touched so far, namely, the preparation of a development plan for Sharjah and the evaluation of projects. The future efforts of ED will have to center around these major activities.
6. It is recommended that ED should have a well designed and officially approved organizational chart, identifying Divisions and Sections with their terms of reference as well as the number of posts with their job descriptions.

7. The ED should have a work programme for at least one or two years. The outputs should be well defined and the requirements identified in the work programme.

8. The staffing pyramid should be completed by adding three posts as clerical personnel and recruiting higher-level expertise. The minimum expertise required at this stage will be:

(1) A high-level development economist for 2-3 years;

(2) An economist specialized in project evaluation and review on permanent basis; and,

(3) A statistician specialized in national accounts for 2-3 years.

In addition, an administrative and public relations officer is needed.

9. To improve the technological base of ED's work, it is recommended that at least electronic desk calculators with memories and printers be used. It would be more advantageous to buy a "personal" computer and, at a later stage, a word processor, in addition to some equipment to achieve self-reliance in printing the ED publications.

10. For the preparation and formulation of the development plan of the Emirate the following is required:

10.1: Administrative requirements.

(a) To issue a circular from H.H. the Governor announcing the start of the plan preparation and instructing all other departments and entities to co-operate with the ED;

(b) To prepare a special budget for the plan;

(c) To establish a general and several sectoral committees to review and approve the strategy, policy measures and investment programmes.

10.2: Substantive requirements

(a) To complete the data base, specially at the aggregate level;

(b) To collect complete information on the development projects, (on-going, in the pipe-line and already identified projects);

(c) To expand, enrich and deepen the studies available in ED with a view to developing them into reports on comprehensive and sectoral assessment of the economy. (This would also serve the purpose of issuing an annual economic report.) These studies should identify bottlenecks, obstacles and problems in Sharjah's economy;

(d) To prepare a macro-economic framework relying on the data mentioned in (a) above;

(e) To prepare a draft on development strategy and sectoral policy measures;

(f) To interview key persons in departments and entities and collect information on achievements, ambitions and programmes of the government and other entities;

(g) To organize meetings, in which solicited papers could be discussed concerning developmental issues;

(h) To prepare a study on the link between development at the federal level and that at the Emirate level.

11. Bearing in mind the international and regional recommendations regarding the timing and time span of development plans, it is recommended to start the preparation for the plan immediately.

12. ECWA could assist in the fields of national accounts, population and demographic data, evaluation of feasibility studies, household surveys and development planning. ECWA could also undertake the responsibility of the preparation and subsequent execution of a technical assistance project on a trust-in-fund basis, aimed at providing assistance in developing planning capabilities of the Emirate.