

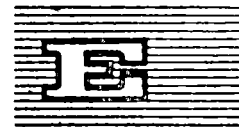
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
Third Conference of African Statisticians  
Addis Ababa, 2-11 October 1963

COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE POUR L'AFRIQUE  
Troisième conférence des statisticiens africains  
Addis-Abéba, 2-11 Octobre 1963

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7. The Secretariat would also like to draw attention to the schedule of priorities for completing the proposed system which is presented in Appendix II of the Group's report. Such a schedule is clearly a useful addition to any system that may be recommended for adoption by countries of the region, though subject as it must be to modification in the light of the special needs and circumstances of each country.

8. The Secretariat considers these features of the proposed system as fully compatible with the general objectives of the Conference and worth preserving in some form in any modification of the United Nations system which may be recommended by the Conference for use in Africa.

9. Looked at more generally, however, the proposals give rise to difficulty at a number of points, partly as a consequence of a lack of cohesiveness in the report as a whole and partly as a consequence of the introduction of modifications to the standard system of peripheral relevance to the main objectives. The areas affected concern primarily (i) the relationship between the proposals of the Group in the body of the report and the system of tables presented in Appendix I, (ii) the correspondence between the concepts and classifications of the proposed system and those of the United Nations system and (iii) the status of the system as a workshop or "intermediate" system. The problems raised are discussed in turn in the following paragraphs.

10. A major difficulty encountered at an early stage in examining the report of the Group is an apparent lack of consistency in the Group's recommendations. For example, in paragraph 16, the Group recommends that "no attempt should be made to distribute domestic product among more than two types of income; wages and salaries and income from enterprises recorded before any deduction for interest or depreciation". The system proposed in Appendix I, however, contains full-fledged appropriation accounts for corporations, general government and households and private non-profit institutions. By definition, these accounts involve a detailed

analysis of the distribution and redistribution of the primary income generated in productive activity and make possible the full distributive shares breakdown recommended in the United Nations system. This breakdown is, nevertheless, omitted in the system presented in the report.

11. A second difficulty, and perhaps the most important of the three enumerated here, is the evident tenuousness of the relationship between the system proposed by the Group and the United Nations system. Examined against the objectives defined by the Conference for the Group's work, the proposed intermediate system has two serious deficiencies in this respect (a) the concepts and definitions of the system are at a number of points in conflict with those of the standard system and (b) the steps necessary to derive the basic tabulations of the standard system are not indicated. As a result of these deficiencies, the implementation of the intermediate system in its present form by any country in the region would result in a substantial complication of the task of reporting its national data in internationally-comparable form.

12. A third difficulty which, in the view of the Secretariat, seriously weakens the Group's proposals is the lack of clear definition of the status of the proposed system. In paragraph 40 of the report, the Group proposes that the system should be regarded as a system of workshop tables or as a stepping-stone towards a system for national presentation. Yet it is clear that while some of the tables are, by virtue of the detail shown, of the nature of workshop tables, others such as the appropriation accounts for the main sectors, the consolidated capital account and the rest-of-the-world account cannot be so regarded. The Secretariat feels that a more definite position should have been reached on this question, possibly by separating the discussion of a system for national presentation from the discussion of alternative approaches towards its compilation.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

13. Future work on the development of an intermediate system might be based on an amended version of the system proposed by the Group with special attention directed to (i) clarifying a number of the recommendations in the report of the Group, (ii) ensuring the consistency of the system with existing international recommendations and (iii) defining the steps necessary to proceed to the full United Nations system of accounts and supporting tables.

14. In the light of this discussion, the Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

"The Conference requests the Secretariat:

To continue its study of ways of adapting the United Nations system of national accounts for use in African countries, taking into consideration the recommendations of the 1962 Working Group on this subject and the desirability in developing such a system of (i) ensuring consistency with existing international recommendations and (ii) clarifying the steps necessary to proceed to the full tabulations of the standard system."