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UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of the Central African Republic

Support of a comprehensive population programme

| | |
|--|---|
| Proposed UNFPA assistance: | \$2 200 000 |
| Estimated value of the Government's contribution: | \$1 300 000 |
| Duration: | Five years |
| Estimated starting date: | July 1984 |
| Executing agencies: | Government of the Central African Republic United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Health Organization (WHO) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) |
| Government co-operating agency: | Ministry of Planning |

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Demographic Facts

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|------|
| Population by sex | | Population density (/sq. km.) | 4 |
| Total (in 1000) | 2,290 | Average annual change | |
| Male (in 1000) | 1,104 | Population increase (in 1000) | 56 |
| Female (in 1000) | 1,186 | Births (in 1000) | 108 |
| Sex ratio (/ 100 females) | 93.1 | Deaths (in 1000) | 53 |
| Population in year 2000 (in 1000) | 3,736 | Net migration (in 1000) | 0 |
| Population by age group | | Rate of annual change | |
| Age 0-14 (in 1000) | 951 | Population change total (%) | 2.29 |
| Age 15-64 (in 1000) | 1,250 | Urban (%) | 4.5 |
| Age 65+ (in 1000) | 89 | Rural (%) | 0.6 |
| Age 0-14 (percentage) | 41.5 | Crude birth rate (/ 1000) | 44.7 |
| Age 15-64 (percentage) | 54.6 | Crude death rate (/ 1000) | 21.8 |
| Age 65+ (percentage) | 3.9 | Natural increase (/ 1000) | 22.9 |
| Age indicators | | Net migration (/ 1000) | 0.0 |
| Median age | 19.3 | Fertility and mortality | |
| Dependency: age 0-14 | 76.1 | Total fertility rate | 5.89 |
| Dependency: age 65+ | 7.1 | Completed family size | N/A |
| Dependency: total | 83.2 | Gross reproduction rate | 2.90 |
| Youth: 15-24 (in 1000) | 420 | Net reproduction rate | 1.90 |
| Women: 15-49 (in 1000) | 543 | General fertility rate (/ 1000) | 190 |
| Urban-rural population | | Child-woman ratio | 723 |
| Urban population (in 1000) | 936 | Infant mortality rate (/ 1000) | 143 |
| Rural population (in 1000) | 1,354 | Life expectancy: male | 41.4 |
| Per cent urban (%) | 40.88 | Life expectancy: female | 44.6 |
| Per cent rural (%) | 59.12 | Life expectancy: total | 43.0 |
| Population density (/ hectare of | | GNP per capita | |
| arable land | 1.03 | (U.S. dollars, 1981) | 320 |

Sources: Area and population density on arable land: derived from Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO Production Yearbook 1980; Gross national product per capita: World Bank, World Development Report 1983; Completed family size: Noreen Goldman and John Hobcraft, "Birth Histories", in Comparative Studies, No. 17 (International Statistical Institute: Voorburg), 1982; all other data: Population Division, United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Demographic Indicators by Countries as Assessed in 1982 (computer printout, 1 November 1983) - "population by sex" through "population density (/sq. km.)" as of 1980, and "average annual change" through "life expectancy: total" as of 1980-1985.

I. SUMMARY

1. UNFPA proposes to support a comprehensive population programme in the amount of \$2,200,000 starting in July 1984 to assist the Government of the Central African Republic, a priority country for UNFPA assistance, in selected population areas. The programme would include projects in the field of maternal and child health and family planning; population information, communication and education; basic data collection and analysis; population dynamics; formulation and evaluation of population policies; and women in development. UNFPA assistance would provide for international experts, salaries of local personnel and other expenses for in-country and overseas training, as well as support for expendable and non-expendable equipment.

II. BACKGROUND

2. The Central African Republic has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as a least developed country. Demographic and other data are provided on the opposite page. The development of the country is retarded by its landlocked location and the great distance (1,008 miles) to the sea. The population is unevenly distributed within the country. The greatest concentration of population is in the western part of the country; large areas in the east are virtually uninhabited. There are numerous ethnic groups, but the Banda and Baya together make up roughly a half of the population, and Sangho, a lingua Franca, has been adopted as the national language. Although 85 per cent of the active population depend on agriculture, only 2 per cent of the country's area is under cultivation, and the tsetse fly restricts animal husbandry over most of the country.

3. The health situation of the Central African Republic is far from satisfactory. The major diseases are infections and parasitic in origin. According to the UNFPA-sponsored basic needs assessment report, 75 per cent of children under 5 years of age are affected. The sterility rate is high and attributed to the wide spread of sexually transmitted diseases and complications due to illegal abortions. The number of health personnel is insufficient; the country counts 60 physicians, 7 pharmacists, 1 nutritionist, 127 midwives and 256 nurses.

4. The health facilities are composed of one teaching hospital affiliated with the University of the Central African Republic, 5 general hospitals of 100 beds each, 10 regional hospitals of 50 beds each, and 52 health centres. Although the number of rural health centres are sufficient, they often operate without adequate medical equipment or drugs and with poor maintenance.

5. According to the United Nations Population Division, "Prior to the Fifth Population Inquiry (1982), the Government had indicated that the anticipated medium-term population size and the level and trends of population growth and fertility were too low. In 1976 it explicitly stated its policy to be

pronatalist. In response to the Fifth Inquiry, it was stated that the principal objective of fertility policy is to improve maternal and child health and family well-being. The levels of mortality and morbidity are perceived to be unacceptable and particular attention is given to child health. The spatial distribution of the population is perceived as being inappropriate, the policy being to reverse the flow of migrants from rural to urban areas. Because of the insignificant level of international migration, the policy is one of non-intervention."

6. UNFPA assistance to the Central African Republic through 1983 totaled \$2,521,233 for the following projects:

(a) Population census and post-census analysis. Preparatory activities for a census were initiated in 1972; the enumeration itself took place in December 1975. Demographic and socio-economic data were collected on each household. Processing of the collected census data encountered some difficulties due to the lack of qualified local personnel in computer data processing. Two publications were issued in 1979 and in 1980 analysis was conducted on sex, age, education and socio-economic characteristics of the population, fertility, mortality and migration.

(b) Development of national maternal/child health and birth spacing programme. The programme is presently ongoing and some positive results have already been achieved. Prior to the initiation of the programme (1978), the Central African Republic had no specific maternal/child health policy. Health centres were not running properly due to the lack of specific policy and qualified personnel. The lack of supplies, equipment and reliable statistical data aggravated the situation. The only maternal/child health activities that existed were the weighing of children and the distribution of malaria tablets, carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Since the initiation of the MCH/birth spacing programme, a Department of Maternal/Child Health and Family Planning has been set up in the Ministry of Health, and a policy established defining family health activities while identifying target groups and standardizing the technical aspects. In addition, the project provided for training of health personnel at the national, regional and local levels. This included training of 34 people in health statistics, in-service training of 80 midwives, and 25 assistant midwives and training of 196 traditional birth attendants. The project also included establishment of a uniform system to collect data; rebuilding and repairing 30 maternity centres; furnishing 61 health centres with MCH/birth spacing supplies and equipment, and establishing collaboration with personnel in the social sector. The tripartite review in regard to this project, held in June 1983, recommended the extension and the strengthening of the programme for the coming years.

(c) Improvement of the civil registration and vital statistics system.

The objective was to assist the Ministry of Planning and Statistics in improving the existing civil registration system in selected areas on a pilot basis and to conduct a survey to test the proficiency of the improved system. A National Commission for Civil Registration was created in 1979 and new forms have been designed. However the project was suspended due to internal difficulties. While the proposed UNFPA programme does not include civil registration, the Government has indicated that this is a priority for the country and UNFPA intends to seek multi-bilateral funding in the amount of \$464,000 for it.

(d) Demographic sample survey. In 1979, UNFPA initiated assistance to the Government to compile updated information on the size and structure of its population. Preparatory activities were underway when the project was suspended due to internal difficulties.

7. Other multilateral assistance has been provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1977 for training workshop for rural leaders with emphasis on rural patterns of living, family size and family living, communication, adult education techniques. Family Planning International Assistance (FPIA) has provided assistance in family planning commodities.

III. THE PROGRAMME

Needs Assessment Mission, 1982

8. The Needs Assessment Mission that visited the Central African Republic in March 1982 recommended that priority assistance be provided in various population categories including the following:

(a) Although important activities have been undertaken in the UNFPA-supported maternal/child health/birth spacing programme, the health system needs some improvements. The Mission recommended the formulation of a national health policy, the strengthening of maternal/child health/family planning service and co-ordination of the international assistance in the health sector.

(b) Without a sound policy of population education, it would not be possible to initiate an efficient population policy. The Mission recommended the formulation of a population education programme within the framework of the reform of the national education system as well as a comprehensive communication programme in support of the population education programme in particular and the population programme in general.

(c) Given the fact that the first population census took place in 1975 and that the data did not cover all demographic information for socio-economic development planning needs, the Mission recommended the funding of the 1985 population census, a civil registration project, and an infant and child mortality survey in both the urban and rural areas.

(d) Due to the fact that the country faces numerous population problems (rural exodus and increasing urbanization, health, mortality, sterility, fertility) the Mission recommended the definition of an institutional framework, the provision of reliable demographic data and the training of qualified personnel for the integration of population variables into socio-economic development planning.

(e) In order to define the conditions for the integration of women into the economic development process, the Mission recommended the creation of a national commission for the promotion and the participation of women in development, the organization of a programme of studies, research and documentation on the status of women in the Central African Republic and the design of a family code.

Proposed UNFPA programme of assistance

9. The five-year programme to which UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of \$2,200,000 has components in maternal/child health and family planning; information, education and communication; data collection and analysis; population policy formulation and women and development.

Maternal/child health and family planning

10. Despite UNFPA assistance and the Government effort to improve the health system, the health situation in the Central African Republic requires further improvement. Therefore UNFPA proposes to strengthen the maternal/child health and family planning programme in order to reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality; to promote family planning; to combat sterility and to improve the well-being through training inside the country and abroad; introduction of family planning service deliveries in MCH centres; integration of MCH activities in rural health centres; undertaking a survey of illegal abortion; weight at birth, maternal mortality, high risk pregnancies, sterility; renovation of rural health centres and provision of information and preventive care on sterility and sexually transmitted diseases; introduction of health data collection in all the MCH centres in view of adequately evaluating the achievements. UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$1,000,000 would cover the costs of one international expert for 2 years, administrative support personnel, medical equipment, construction costs, printing costs, fellowships, training seminars, local salaries, vehicles, office supplies and equipment, audio-visual material contraceptives and operation and maintenance. WHO and UNICEF would be the executing agencies.

Information, education and communication

11. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of \$400,000 to be divided between the following two projects:

12. Population education in schools. UNFPA proposes to assist the Government in introducing population education including sex education in the reform of the educational system and to undertake a study on sexual life and responsible parenthood. UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$250,000 would cover the costs of one international expert for 8 months, fellowships, audio-visual equipment and materials, printing costs, one vehicle, office supplies and equipment, operation and maintenance. UNESCO would be the executing agency.

13. Communication support for the population programme. UNFPA proposes to assist the Government in creating a population information and communication co-ordinating unit to be attached to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The Unit would be responsible for integrated programmes aiming at the general public or at specific audiences. UNFPA assistance totalling \$150,000 would cover the costs of one communication expert for 4 months, audio-visual material and equipment, training seminars, office supplies and equipment. UNESCO would be the executing agency.

Basic data collection

14. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of \$570,000 to carry out the second nationwide population census in 1985 as well as the processing and the analysis of resulting data. UNFPA assistance, would provide funds for one international expert for two years, office supplies and equipment, vehicles, data processing equipment, operation and maintenance. The United Nations would be the executing agency.

Population policy formulation

15. Proposed UNFPA assistance would aid the Government in the creation of a population unit within the Ministry of Planning in order to formulate population policies. UNFPA support totalling \$190,000 would fund one international expert for one year, fellowships, training seminars, office supplies and equipment, one vehicle, operation and maintenance, printing costs. ILO would be the executing agency.

Special programme

16. UNFPA proposes to assist the Organization of the Central African Women to create a national commission for the promotion and the participation of women in the implementation of population/development process. UNFPA support totalling \$40,000 would help to fund a technical assistance to the secretariat of the commission and to organize a national seminar on awareness creation. The Government would be the executing agency.

17. The programme will be monitored according to the revised "UNFPA Instructions on Integrated System for Monitoring the Implementation of Country Programmes and Country Projects" (UNFPA/RR/78/23 dated 15 September 1978). Although the "Instructions" emphasize distinct components of the monitoring system (progress reports, tripartite reviews, annual country reviews, final report), it also includes reporting by the UNFPA deputy representative to headquarters in order to identify problems at an early stage.

18. The proposed UNFPA contribution for the five-year period, subject to availability of funds, by programme areas, is as follows:

| <u>Programme area</u> | |
|---|-----------|
| . Maternal child health and family planning | 1.000 000 |
| . Information, education, and communication | 400 000 |
| . Basic data collection and analysis | 570 000 |
| . Population policy formulation | 190 000 |
| . Women in population activities | 40 000 |
| TOTAL | 2.200 000 |

19. The status of programme and project development, as of June 1984, is expected to be as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| . Approved and allocated | 672.779 |
| . Approved for allocation pending Governing Council decision | 1.200 000 |
| . Pending | 327 221 |
| TOTAL | 2.200 000 |

IV. RECOMMENDATION

20. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve assistance to the Central African Republic in the amount of \$2,200,000 for five years; and

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of the Central African Republic and with the executing agencies.