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**ECONOMIC REGIONALISATION
AS A METHOD OF COORDINATING
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF AFRICA**

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**ECONOMIC REGIONALISM AS A METHOD FOR CO-ORDINATING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

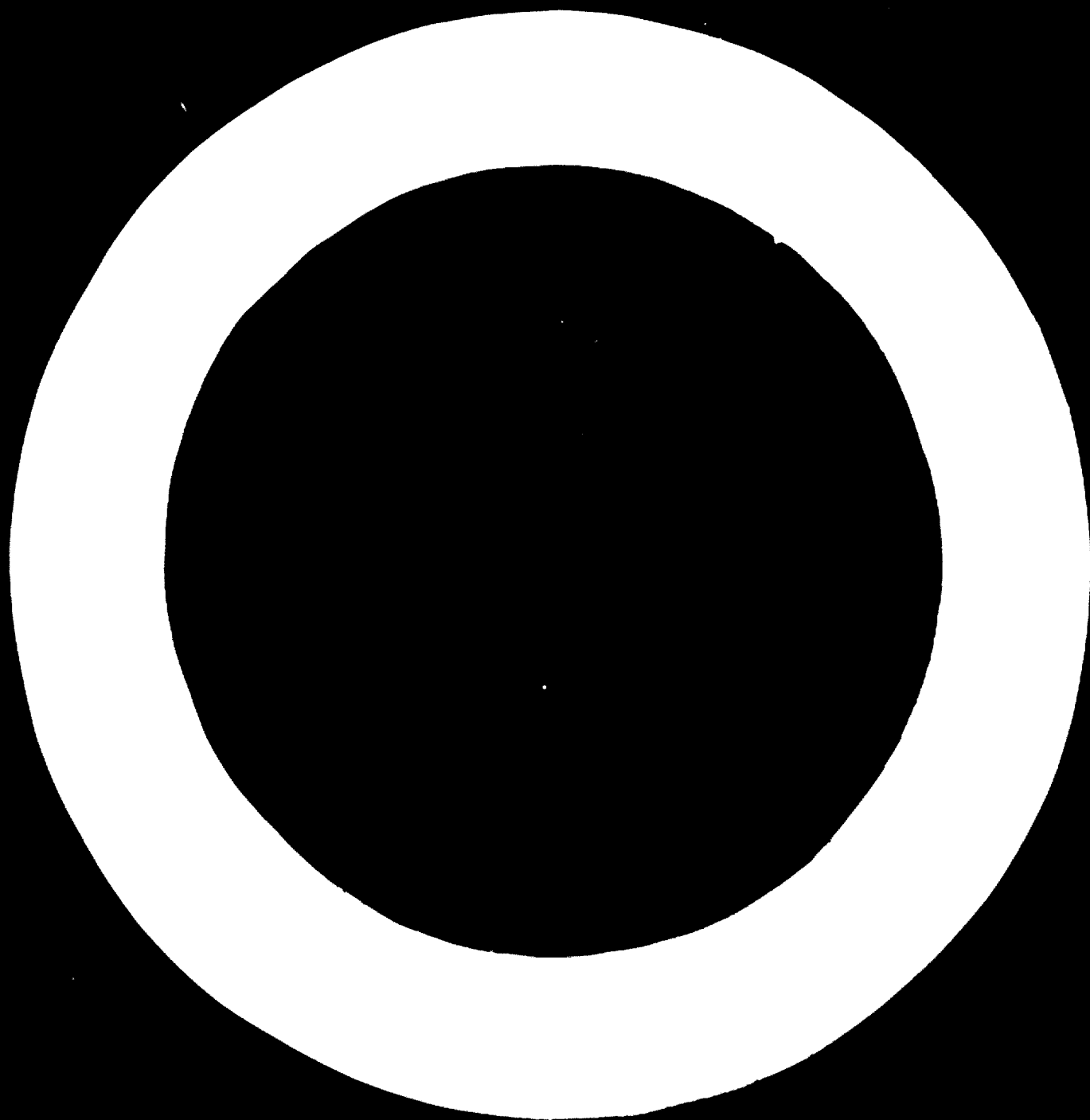
SUMMARY

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Submitted by
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1. There are many international scientific and political publications concerned with the co-ordination problems of Africa. Nevertheless, the problems of co-ordination of economic development need further study. In fact, even the Soviet science and practice of planning has gained wide experience in co-ordinating economic development at various levels. Some of the scientific methods and tools of planning can be applied to co-ordinating economic programmes of developing countries, including countries of Africa.

Three main aspects of economic development co-ordination

2. Co-ordination problems can be classified under the following headings:

- (a) Territorial co-ordination
- (b) Field (technological) co-ordination
- (c) Financial-political co-ordination

From the scientific point of view, territorial co-ordination is the proper interaction of territorial units within complex economic regions of different formations. It is obvious that such territorial co-ordination should not infringe upon the sovereignty of states within these regions. Field (technological) co-ordination consists in co-ordination of national plans for the development of various branches of production, especially heavy industry, within existing territorial boundaries. In some ways financial-political co-ordination is the one aspect of co-ordination which has been studied most. Some specific problems of financial co-ordination have not been studied in as much detail, although the principle of common accounts through special regional or sub-regional banks of development is not recognized universally.

Economic regionalism - the main method of territorial co-ordination of economic development

3. The formation of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) by independent African states and the work of the Economic Commission for Africa (E.C.A.) has given practical significance to the problem of the division of the continent into regions. Although the principles accepted by E.C.A. are founded on criteria of neighbourhood and the location relative to four cardinal points, the divisions made by O.A.U. in contrast to well-known geographic publications on Africa provide for co-ordinated development of large-scale industrial enterprises.

4. Extensive experience of the Soviet Union in economic regionalism has proved the importance of power and transport facilities in this process. The network of big power stations was included in the GOELMO plan, the first Soviet economic development plan to supply the economic regions with cheap energy. Subsequent development of the power industry (hydropower, coal, oil, natural gas) determines in many ways the common technological connexions in a developing industry and exerts influence on the specialization of the region's economy.
5. The first stage in the hierarchy of Africa's economic regions may be the unification of countries within the sub-regions of ECA but on a smaller scale. Taking into account Soviet experience in economic regionalism as well as the importance of the main elements of infrastructure - energy and transport in Africa's case - it seems expedient to apply two criteria for selecting the first economic regions: the community with the best power resources, and close transport connexions. Soviet experience in the economic development of the country's backward regions before the revolution shows that the first criterion of selecting the community with the best power resources - especially at the present stage of the scientific and technological progress - has had general and specific influence. This criterion is especially important for countries in the basins of Africa's big rivers with great hydropower potential.
6. Close transport connexions are of universal significance. The absence or presence of direct transport connexions in Africa's conditions has a determining influence on the delineation of complex economic regions.
7. The application of these criteria gives the working hypothesis for construction of the economic region's network. Within this network the boundaries of the sub-regions of ECA and those of the economic regions coincide closest in Central Africa where the basin of the Congo River serves as the main pivot. In other sub-regions the internal economic boundaries can be easily traced. This is due mainly to the isolation of internal transport systems.
8. In the North African sub-region the most closely connected are the Magrib countries and Libya which have common tasks in exploitation and transportation of oil and natural

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gas (Algeria, Libya, Tunisia). The fifth country of the sub-region, United Arab Republic, is a typical "Nile country", which in view of the problems of the flow of the Nile, is connected with Sudan and the rest of the Nile countries of East Africa.

9. There is great economic heterogeneity in the West and West sub-regions. At least three regions can be named in West Africa:

- (a) Northern - Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Portuguese Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. For some of these countries the exploitation of the Senegal River water resources is the common problem.
- (b) Central - Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey. The common elements for this region are the Abidjan-Ouagadougou Railroad and the hydropower resources of the Volta River.
- (c) Southern - Nigeria and Niger; to a certain extent, Chad and Cameroon, which officially are a part of Central Africa, can be included in this region. The common elements are transport and the resources of the Niger River and Lake Chad.

10. The picture for the East-African sub-region is practically the same except that some of the countries are more closely connected by the two big railroad systems.

There are four regions:

- (a) Northeastern - Ethiopia, Somalia and French Somaliland. Common connexions are - the Addis-Ababa-Djibouti railroad and the utilization of land in the frontier zone.
- (b) Eastern - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. There is a well-developed railroad system and some common services.
- (c) Southeastern - Zambia, Malawi, Rhodesia and Mozambique. There is a common transport system including two ports - Beira and Lourenço Marques.
- (d) The island part of this region has very poor economic connexions and its future development depends on the establishment of regular sea communications.

11. The countries of South Africa - Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South-West Africa and South-African Republic - are closely associated in many fields of economy.

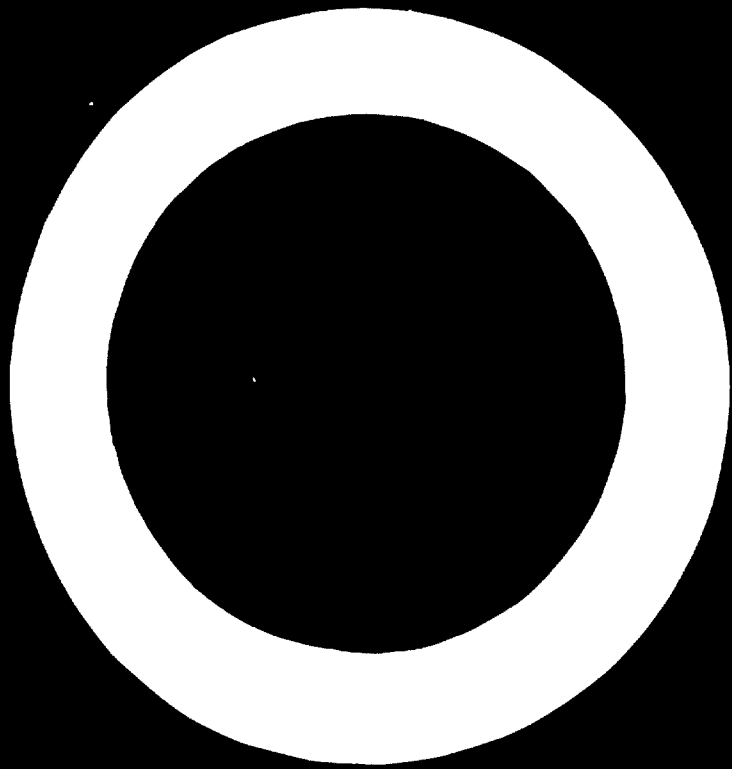
12. This hypothesis of Africa's economic regionalism in comparison with the network of sub-regions of ECA permits us to make some conclusions and raises some new problems.

- (a) In some cases the economic regions have already been formed and should be treated as such.

- (b) At the present level of development of the productive forces and transport systems the apportionment of the first complex economic regions is necessary to determine the area pattern of the market for co-ordinated enterprises within the field programmes.
- (c) The proposed network of ten economic regions is not ideal, but this is due to objective reasons and the fact that any scheme of economic regionalism has its defects.

13. The most important problems concerning the scheme, as well as ECA's network, include the actual coincidence of the spheres of influence of economic factors, correlation of complex and field (branch) regioning, development of big river basins and raising of less-developed African countries.

14. The development of river basins is a special case in the programmes of co-ordination. Judging from construction experience of the Volga, Dnepr and Angala river cascades in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the wide development of water and land resources of big African basins will require a complex network of various power, land-reclamation, road-building and industrial enterprises linked with common co-ordination plans for industrial development within economic regions, sub-regions of ECA and all Africa with due regard for world market requirements.



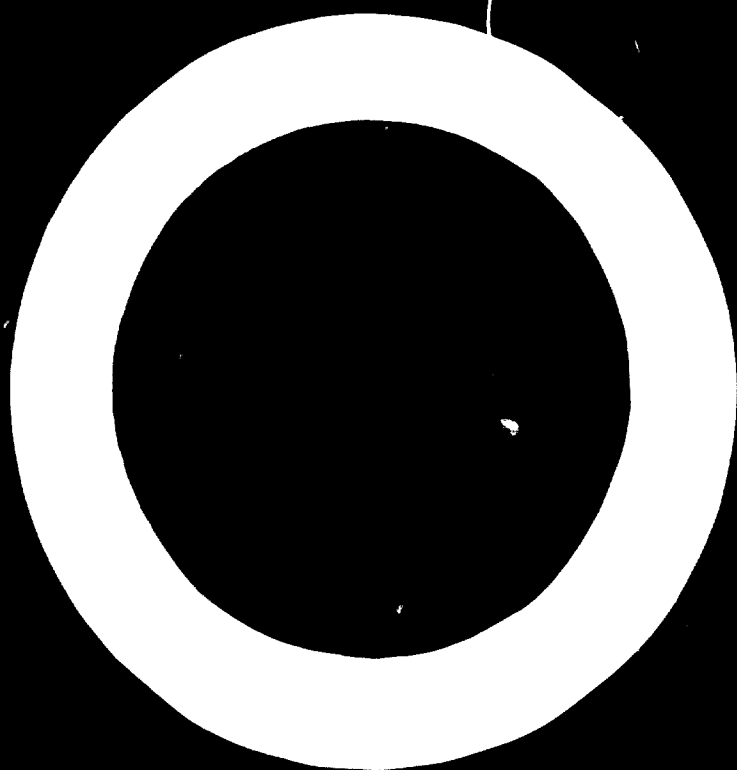
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ECONOMIC REGIONALISATION
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OF AFRICA

Moscow 1967



In the field of coordinated economic development, the Bureau is a sign of the return of the question of the problem of industrialization to the vast majority of developing countries. At a regional conference on industrialization (Cuba, Cairo, Santiago and Havana) following the Athens symposium) to a degree or another stressed the need for coordination of national plans and cooperation between neighbouring countries. Questions of industrial investment and production were discussed, especially in the branches of heavy industry and the infrastructure, and the importance of reports, etc. (See references 1, 2, 3, 4).

The distribution of economic development is also important for several countries, in view of the political fragmentation of the continent and the narrowness of the economic market in all the countries belonging to the Economic Commission for Africa. In this economic structure, relative to the problems of industrialization, the African continent as a whole is more united than the countries of the ECLA and Commission for Asia and the Far East and the Economic Commission for Latin America,

and this defines the specific nature of a number of problems of coordination.

3. Quite a few economic and political studies of the problem of coordination have been made (within the framework of the U.N.) (see references; for example, 5, 6, 7), touching on the problems in various combinations. Nevertheless the problems of coordinating economic development need further study both for practical ends and with a view to extending and deepening theoretical understanding of the nature of this problem.

4. In fifty years Soviet planning has accumulated rich theoretical and practical experience in the coordination and mutual integration of development programmes on widely different scales. The general balances for the economy worked out in the Twenties have now been put on a contemporary mathematical basis for the whole Soviet economy and its individual branches of industry and economic regions. The methods of economic regionalisation first elaborated when compiling the plan for electrification of the country (GOELRO) underlie modern practice in territorial planning. In our view, some of these planning methods and procedures can be use-

fully applied to coordinating the economic programmes of developing countries, taking due account of their present-day position.

Three Main Aspects of Coordinating Economic Development

5. In our view the whole multiform problem of coordination can be divided into three main aspects:

(a) territorial coordination;

(b) industrial (technological) coordination;

(c) financial and political coordination.

This approach allows us to systematise very different measures of coordinating economic development, independent of their scale, character and orientation.

6. From a theoretical point of view territorial coordination includes the correct organisation of territorial units into industrial or complex economic regions of various kinds. The industrial economic region is drawn according to one index (usually the freight movement of raw materials, semi-manufactures, or finished products) and as a rule is a market zone of homogeneous production. A complex or

integrated economic region is delineated on the basis of indices or criteria influencing the whole economy and determining the economic interrelations of the region. Economic regionalisation is one of the most complex problems of economics and geography, and it is no accident that territorial coordination is the least worked out aspect of the general problem. There is absolutely no argument, however, that any territorial coordination must in no way reduce the sovereign rights of the states joining industrial or complex economic regions. In the next two paragraphs we briefly consider the essence of the other two aspects, and in doing so pay special attention to the territorial aspect of coordination in its practical significance for the African continent.

7. Industrial (technological) coordination is included in the integration of national plans for the development of different branches of production, especially of heavy industry, within given territorial boundaries. Where these economic boundaries do not correspond to the requirements of the industrial economic region, planning estimates balancing supply and demand have no solid foundation. Internal coordi-

nation of the programmes for different industries requires inter-industry input-output balances. One of the first examples of such work is the balance for the countries of the East African sub-region for 1975, worked out by the ECA in 1965-1966 (see 8). The method of block matrixes, based on the inter-branch balance, can be used for calculations on the coordination of economic districts.

8. Financial and political coordination in some ways is the aspect of coordination worked out in most detail. The fact that the optimal division of labour through the mechanism of the free market does not operate in the conditions of the countries of Asia and the Far East (cf. 5, p. 17) necessitates different measures, such as the coordination of development programmes, and long-term trade agreements, preference tariffs, and customs unions, etc., to ensure the functioning of the coordinated branches of the economies. Such an analysis of the political aspect is made in the model convention for sub-regional common markets in Africa (see 6). The concrete questions of financial coordination are less fully studied, although the principles of common accounts through

special regional or sub-regional Development Banks are now commonly accepted. Further more, to balance coordination income and expenditure it will be necessary to work out a scheme of the financial flows possible within a common input-output model. This task is closely linked with the first two aspects of coordination - territorial (where sets limits for the financial balance) and industrial (which gives the interconnected set of coordinated industries within which integration of all types is possible).

9. The realisation of all forms of coordination encounters a host of objective (technical and financial) and subjective (political and psychological) obstacles. They all appear in various ways in the different aspects and at the different stages of coordination; however objective economic laws necessitate further theoretical and practical study of the basis on which the process of industrialising developing countries can successfully proceed.

Economic Regionalisation - the Principal Way to Coordinate Territorial Economic Development

10. Various schemes for the regionali-

sation of Africa have been put forward in geographical literature, being applied without detailed substantiation to the compilation of regional material. The fundamental criteria for delineating regions are usually found in the position of a part of the continent relative to the countries of the world, and to a lesser extent in community of paths of historical development and a number of factors of physical geography.

11. Analysis of the regionalisation groupings used in their surveys of Africa by Saggate, Fitzgerald, Bernard and Maurette, Stamp, Haines, Harrison-Church and his co-authors and Mountjoy and Embleton (9-15) reveals a considerable divergence of results. This is explained in part by overlapping of the fields of a number of region-forming factors in objective reality, and in part by differences in the aims of the studies and in the personal inclinations of the authors. One of the best grounded schemes was used by Mountjoy and Embleton (15), who based themselves mainly on the peculiarities of African physical geography, which shows for example in their division of the Sahara and South-West Africa into separate regions.

12. The setting up of the Organisation of African Unity by the independent African states, and the work of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, have given practical importance to the problem of regionalisation as the territorial aspect of coordinating economic development. The division of the continent into four sub-regions - Northern, Western, Eastern and Central - laid the organisational basis for the collection, processing and generalising of economic information in stage I and for convening sub-regional conferences and setting up sub-regional economic organisations in stage II.

13. Although the regionalisation of the ECA is based on the same criteria of proximity and position relative to the countries of the world, its groupings, in contrast to the geographical works already cited, take the coordinated development of large-scale industrial enterprises into consideration. The production of these undertakings can often compete with imports only within the whole regional market. Soundly based regionalisation is needed in order to outline the spheres of influence (product markets) of industrial undertakings and elements of the infra-

structure, since their optimal size depends on an exact estimate of the capacity of the markets and consumption of the territory served.

14. The wide experience of the Soviet school of economic regionalisation (see 16) confirms the important role of power and trunk transport routes in the forming of regions. In GOELRO a network of large regional power stations was already planned, calculated to supply the economic regions with cheap power. Furthermore, the character of the power base (water power, coal, oil, natural gas) determines in the main the general technological links in developing industrialisation, and influences the whole specialisation of the economic region. The importance of trunk transport routes - railway or water - is determined by the rapidly rising flow of raw materials, semi-manufactures and end products during industrialisation, and also by the increasing specialisation of the economics of the countries and regions.

15. A first stage in the hierarchy of economic regions for Africa in our view could be the grouping of the countries within the framework of the ECA sub-regions, though on a smaller scale, as a

rule. Considering the experience of Soviet economic regionalisation and the importance of the basic elements of the infrastructure - power and transport in African conditions - it would be expedient to apply two fundamental criteria to outlining economic regions of the first order: community of main power resources, and close transport connections.

16. The first criterion - community of main power resources - as the experience of the economic development of previously backward regions of the USSR has shown, has both a general and a specialising influence, particularly at the present stage of scientific and technical progress. The network of power transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, and the public transport system serve as arteries for the economic region. This criterion is particularly important for countries located in the basins of the great African rivers, with their rich potential of water power, and is a reason for creating a number of regional organisations, especially in West Africa.

17. Close transport connections have a more universal significance, since their competitiveness depends very largely on

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the magnitude of the transport component in the costs of production, on wholesale and retail prices. In territories with a well-developed transport system a plurality of market zones for various goods arises. In African conditions the existence or absence of direct transport links provides a clearer separation of complex economic regions.

18. Application of these two criteria gives as a working hypothesis for outlining a group of economic regions which could be useful in coordinating various programmes of economic development. In outline this grouping coincides most fully with the boundaries of the ECA subregions and economic regions in Central Africa. The Congo basin is the basic link uniting the various countries of Central Africa; and development of its hydro-electric resources (particularly within the "INGA" project) requires broad cooperation of the countries of the sub-region.

It should be noted here that development of the resources of Lake Chad requires the cooperation of countries of two sub-regions - West and Central Africa. Here we come up against a typical example of the need for inter-regional coordina-

tion as a result of overlap of the spheres of influence of different economic factors, on which we shall touch briefly in paragraph 25.

19. In other sub-regions internal economic boundaries can be closely followed. These are determined mainly by the disconnectedness of the internal transport systems, arising from the history of railway development in Africa as predominantly "penetration routes", and the basic orientation of African economies on overseas markets.

20. In the North African sub-region the countries of the Maghreb and Libya are very closely linked by their community of interest in exploiting and transporting oil and natural gas (Algeria, Libya; Tunis) In addition the maritime location of their principal industrial centres favours the setting up of regular coastal shipping lines. The fifth country of the sub-region - the United Arab Republic - is a typical "Nile country", and is linked with the Sudan, and even the countries of East Africa, by the problem of regulating the flow of the Nile. The historically determined discontinuity of the railway systems of Egypt and the Sudan, and the gravitation

of the Sudan towards the countries of East Africa noted in recent years, cut across the natural development of interconnections. The common problems of the Nile countries have been often posed by the majority of geographers within the frame of a North-East African geographic region (9, 10, 14, 15), in which Ethiopia and Somalia (14, 15) are also included. Only Stamp has stressed certain peculiarities of the U.A.R. and put it in a special region (22).

21. Great economic fragmentation is encountered in the Western and Eastern sub-regions. The railways of West Africa comprise 11 isolated systems; and the hydro-electric resources possessed by the majority of the countries of the sub-region are also divided among river systems. In our view West Africa can be divided into at least three economic regions.

(a) a northern region: Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, the Republic of Guinea, Guinea (Portuguese), Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Some of these countries are united by the problem of developing the resources of the Senegal River in the "Inter-Governmental Committee for Developing the Senegal Basin"; Mali and Senegal are linked by the Dakar-Niger highway; the

Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have the problem of exploiting the iron ore reserves of the Mt. Nimba;

(b) a central region: the Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey. The elements linking this region are the Abidjan-Ouagadougou railway and the power resources of the Volta basin. The development of a power transmission grid could provide the countries of this region with power from the Akosombo hydro-electric station (Ghana), one of the largest in Africa. Lastly is the factor, not least in importance, of migratory labour in the Ivory Coast and Ghana;

(c) a southern region: Nigeria and the Niger Republic, which also attracts Chad, and to some extent Cameroun, though they officially belong to Central Africa. The transport links and the problems of the Niger River and Lake Chad are obvious.

22. A similar picture is given by the countries of the East African sub-region, but with this difference, that the individual countries of the group are much more closely linked than in West Africa in view of the existence of two large railway systems. This was used by the authors of the 10-year industrial development programme

(8) to distinguish multinational markets coinciding closely with the concept of economic regions. In our view East Africa may be divided into four regions:

(a) north-east - Ethiopia, the Republic of Somalia, and Somaliland (French). They are linked by the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway, and by problems of utilising the land in the frontier zones. For political reasons the economic connections of the Republic of Somalia with Ethiopia (and equally with Kenya) are very weakly developed;

(b) eastern, embracing East Africa proper (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) and Burundi and Ruanda. They are linked by a developed transport system, based on a railway network (1000 mm gauge) and a number of common services;

(c) south-east - Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia (and the associate member of the ECA, Mozambique). These countries are linked by a common transport system, including the Mozambique ports of Beira and Laurencio Marques, through which more than 90 per cent of the foreign trade of the region passes, and the utilisation of the power resources of the Zambezi. The labour links of the region are also very strong;

(d) an island region embracing the Malagasy Republic, Mauritius, Reunion and the Comores Islands adjoins the south-eastern region. In distinction from the continental economic regions, the islands are linked only by their nearness to each other in the south-western part of the Indian Ocean. Economic links between them and the other countries of East Africa are weak, and their future prospects depend on the efficient organisation of regular maritime communications.

23. The countries of southern Africa - Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South-West Africa and the Republic of South Africa - are very closely linked in many branches of their economic.

Since Botswana and Lesotho have already achieved independence, their participation in the work of the ECA is not in question, but the real structure of economic interconnections historically formed in South Africa must be taken into account in any plans for coordinating their development.

24. This working hypothesis for the economic regionalisation of Africa, in comparison with the accepted grouping of ECA sub-regions, enables certain conclusions to

be drawn and new problems to be posed.

(a) The economic regions are already formed in a number of cases and are not speculative categories. Ignoring of economic interconnections actually existing within these regions could lead to large financial losses.

(b) The delineation of complex economic regions of the first order or type (multinational markets or market zones) (17) is necessary at the present level of development of productive forces and transport systems in order to give a theoretical grounding to the market zones of coordinated enterprises within industrial programmes. Ignoring of the boundaries of economic regions can artificially exaggerate the estimated size of the market and lead to miscalculations in industrial projects.

(c) The groupings proposed, consisting of ten economic regions of category I, far from perfect, which is explained to a considerable extent by objective conditions and which is inherent to any scheme of economic regionalisation, independent of the value of the principles on which it is based. The most important of the problems arising in studying this scheme (which applies equally to the ECA groupings) include the actual coincidence of spheres of

influence of economic factors, the relation of complex and industrial regionalisation, the development of large river basins, and the advance of the economically least developed countries of Africa.

25. Coincidence of the spheres of influence of different economic factors is clearly observable in the example of the utilisation of the large water resources of the Nile, Lake Chad and the East African lakes. The study and solution of these problems within the limits of any one economic region (or even of a sub-region) is artificially hampered by economic interconnections of one kind or another. At a number of points this question merges with the problem of aid for the least developed countries of Africa. It is probable that inter-regional coordination of expenditure will be necessary to accelerate the economic development of these countries, and uniting of the forces of several countries and regions. A number of major projects, like the plan to develop internal transport links in the region of the Great Lakes, also require coordination at an inter-regional level (18).

26. Thus far we have spoken of complex (integral) economic regions, assuming that

industrial regions will fall within the complex ones because of the discontinuity of the transport systems. However, this position could be changed:

(a) with the development of transport and

(b) with a rise in the transport demands of production on the existing transport system.

In these cases it is necessary to divide industries in coordination programmes according to the size and character of their market. As a general rule industries can be divided into international (market zones, world markets), regional, national, and local. Examples of such an approach are to be found in the sub-regional documents of the ECA (e.f. 8, 19). It is evident that input-output balance tables make sense in modernisation only in relation to a hierarchical analysis by industries.

27. Plans for the development of river basins are a special case of coordination programme. As the experience of planning and building the Volga, Dnieper and Angara cascades in the USSR has shown, as well as the development of the Tennessee Valley in the USA, broad development of the water and land resources of large ri-

vers requires a complex of various undertakings - power, land improvement, highway and industrial. Obviously, development of the Nile, Congo, Senegal, Niger and Zambezi must be linked with general plans for the coordination of industrial construction and investment, and the training of a skilled labour force, etc., within economic regions, ECA sub-regions, and Africa as a whole, taking into account the requirements of world markets.

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