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*for a sustainable future*

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Seminar on Industrial Information  
for ~~the~~ ECA Region - countries

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17 - 20 April 1972

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

I. The role of scientific technical information in  
industrial development

1. The first item on the Agenda will seek to determine the role of an "Industrial Information Service", that is an organization which provides industry with various scientific, technological, economic and business management information, including data on the properties, processing of materials and on new techniques, as well as on results of scientific research and development which apply to industrial production.
2. The importance of disseminating technological innovations in developing countries and of the adaptation of existing and new technology to the particular conditions in developing countries in Africa will be discussed.
3. The Seminar will further examine various aspects connected with industrial information services in the ECA region and ways and means of improving their effectiveness, including action through regional and international organizations.
4. Few, if any, enterprises in developing countries can individually provide the scientific and technical information required for their successful operation. The average enterprise is likely to be small and unable to provide a special unit for such services as for example: engineering advice, market research, feasibility studies, the collection, processing and distribution of published literature and practical data, etc.
5. Consequently, the present state of information systems for industry and the role of "national technical information services", and government responsibilities in providing information for industry will be subjects for discussion at the Seminar.

1/ Organized by UNIDO in co-operation with ECA.

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6. Developing countries need scientific and industrial information systems geared to the characteristics, capabilities and location of the producers and users. Their internal national systems must not only be effectively linked with information networks of industrialized countries, but also with systems in other developing countries. During the Seminar the participants will discuss existing systems of collection, processing and distribution of industrial information by advanced and developing countries, by regions, and by international organizations. This should result in a better understanding of the organizational structure of information centres, evaluating, selecting, transferring and digesting industrial information is required for local needs.

## II. Practical use of the flow of expertise and industrial information to developing areas

Activities in the field of industrial information are directed toward accelerating the flow of expertise and useful industrial information to developing areas; drawing on both the industrial know-how of advanced, as well as on the newly acquired experience of developing countries. In order to put this available knowledge and experience to practical use particular attention is paid to marshalling and disseminating the fund of industrial knowledge already acquired and recorded. The Seminar will consider the following points:

1. Basic concepts and terminology and an introduction to the importance of industrial and trade information. Interdependence of scientific, technological and economic information.
2. Industrial information material
  - (a) Informative sources on industrial techniques and processes, including know-how and management data (handbooks, reference books, periodicals, manuals, etc. guides to information and professional organizations);
  - (b) Sources of information on industrial equipment, various products, firms, etc. (directories, export guides, repertoires, trade and firm literature, catalogues, etc.);
  - (c) Published literature covering general topics (books, journals, pamphlets, government publications, patents, reports, etc.);
  - (d) Internally prepared practical data or written material (research and progress reports dealing with experience of enterprises, institutes, laboratories, specific unpublished material etc.);
  - (e) Audio-visual material;
  - (f) Knowledge and experience of scientific and technical experts.

3. **Methodological features of information**

- (a) Treatment and use of specialized sources and special types of material (reports, patents, standards, etc.);
- (b) Acquisition, collection and registering of various information sources for immediate retrieval;
- (c) Handling and recording inquiries, investigation of the users needs;
- (d) Active dissemination of industrial information (selection of material, methods of ratification, use of various reproduction methods);
- (e) Organization of industrial information extension services;
- (f) Physical layout of services and equipment
- (g) New trends and techniques in the organization of industrial information systems.

III. Organizational aspects and problems

The acceleration of industrial development is dependent to a considerable degree on the availability of a variety of supporting services (such as information services), whose effectiveness in turn depends on the local institutional infrastructure providing these services.

It is often necessary to set up special agencies to provide the required industrial services. This depends, partly, on the type of the local economic system. These agencies may be governmental, non-governmental or jointly sponsored. The experiences of developing countries in setting up industrial information centres, as well as specific examples taken from country reports and discussion papers submitted by participants and UNIDO's Secretariat will be reviewed. Also, the comparative effectiveness of centralized versus decentralized institutional approaches will be examined.

(a) Role of public and private sectors and their relationship in the provision of industrial information services

Certain industrial services can only be provided by the government, others by the organized private sector, such as professional associations, or a combination of the two. The role of each sector and existing systems of collection, processing and distribution of technical and industrial information (scientific, technical and research libraries, industrial organizations, academic institutions, professional associations, research institutes, government bureaus or other services) will be identified and discussed.

The need for co-operation between the public and private sectors in an undertaking of such complex proportions is readily apparent in order to avoid efforts being duplicated. Co-operation in establishing and maintaining adequate channels of communications between the various entities dealing with these common problems is vital. The Seminar will examine a number of such channels currently in use, as well as, other aspects of public and private relationships in some countries as reported in country reports and other background papers.

(b) Organizational factors and functions of agencies involved in industrial development

The technical services are activities or programmes designed to enable business and industry to acquire and use scientific and engineering information more effectively, through the following means:

1. Analyzing problems of regions and industries to determine new opportunities of applying technology;
2. Preparing and disseminating technical reports, abstracts, computer tapes, microfilm, review and similar scientific and engineering information, including the establishment of state or regional technical information centres for such purposes;
3. Providing a reference service to identify sources of engineering and scientific expertise. Any technical information service for industry in a specific country or region should therefore attempt to establish instruction courses and instruction booklets for firms on where to obtain and how to use technical information seen against the local background;
4. Sponsoring industrial workshops, seminars, training programmes, extension courses, demonstrations and field visits which are designed to encourage the effective application of scientific and engineering information.

(c) Financial policies

In order to function with some success, an industrial information service must be assured of a reasonable degree of financial support. Policies for their financing must take into account not only the immediate, but also the long range financial needs. Some agencies (or centres) subsist on an annual budgetary grant and subsidies from the Government, others on a self-generated income, but mostly they use both. The following points will be considered:

- (i) The system of annual budgetary appropriations and how this effects institutional long range planning;
- (ii) Provision of long term capital for expansion of services;
- (iii) Whether or not certain services should be paid for by those industries that utilize them.

(d) Problems of co-ordination and co-operation

It frequently happens that a number of information offices have joint or interlocking responsibilities in a certain area of activity. In such cases it is not unusual to find these offices adopting divergent approaches to the same problem with resultant dissipation of energy and resources. The Seminar will discuss the mechanism for co-ordination between the different agencies in regard to similar or related services.

Possible co-operation of existing information centres in African countries in order to foster exchange of industrial information is also a problem of practical improvement of information services in developing countries.

#### IV. Bilateral aid and United Nations technical assistance

A number of developing countries have received technical assistance from some developed and perhaps from other developing countries in organizing their industrial information centres. Specific examples from some countries will be examined.

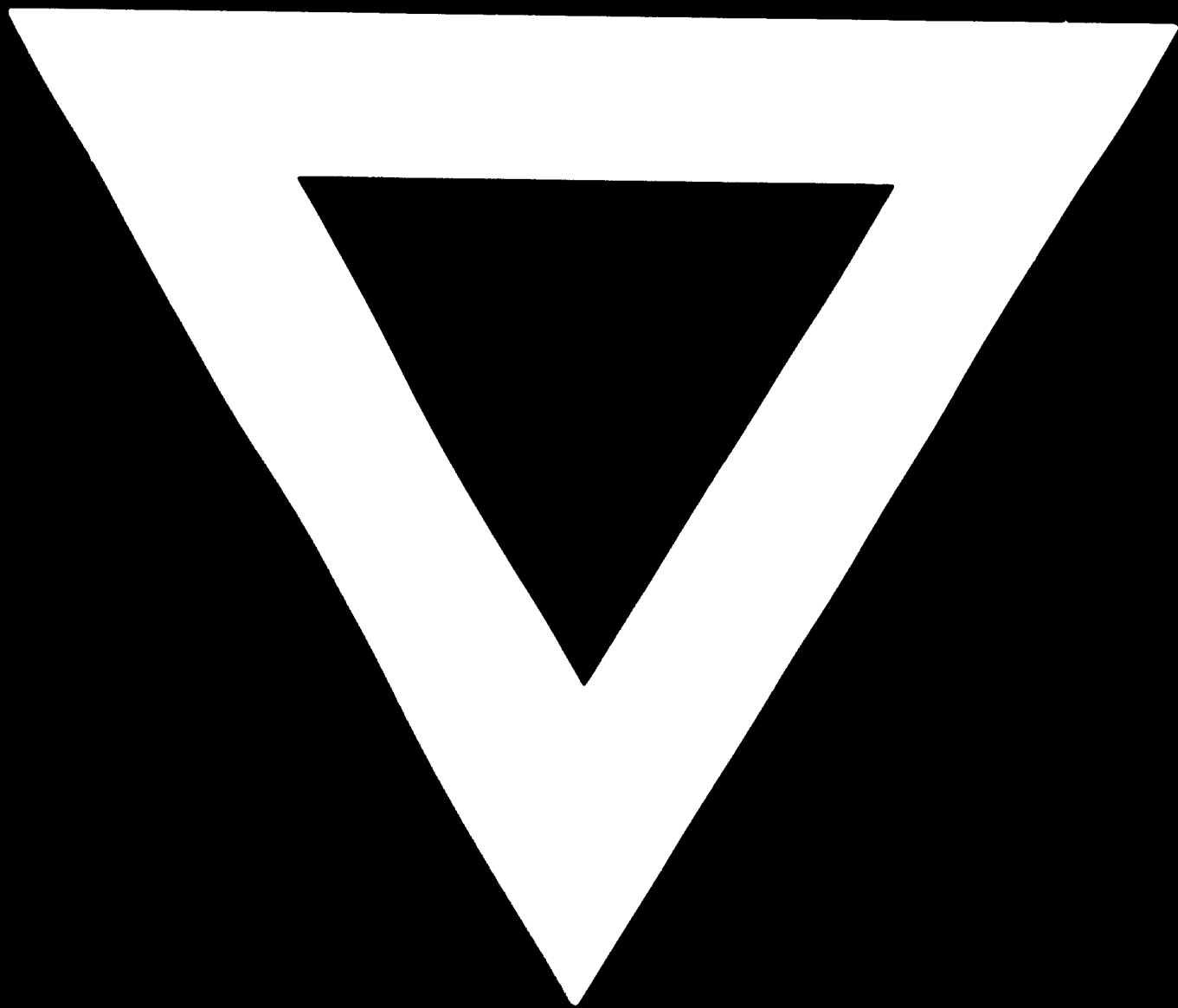
The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has been active in the field of industrial information for developing countries. The UNIDO Industrial Information Service provides practical assistance to developing countries by answering, without charge, their inquiries on problems of industry. The four components of the service are the following:

1. Industrial Inquiry Service;
2. Advisory Service on the Supply of Industrial Equipment;
3. Industrial Promotion Service;
4. Roster of Industrial Consultants.

The activities of UNIDO in the domain of information and promotion are accordingly geared toward expanding the flow of information and scientific and technological knowledge from existing resources from all over the world to developing countries in order to accelerate the pace of their industrialization. The role of UNIDO in the field calls for the promotion of the flow of information in two directions: the transfer of know-how from industrialized to developing countries, the communication of information from developing countries on new manufacturing opportunities and industrial products in order to promote the input of resources and to open up potential markets. The dissemination of information on industrial development through periodicals and other publications is an integrated part of UNIDO's activities. The ultimate aim of UNIDO is to ensure that adequate industrial information facilities are available in every developing country. The primary task of UNIDO in the sphere of industrial information is, therefore, to assist developing countries to build up local industrial information services, to train and upgrade their personnel and to promote the continuous flow of industrial information towards and between these services. Ways and means of implementation of this task will be discussed by the participants of the Workshop.

The role of other regional and international organizations such as ECA, UNESCO, FTI, etc. in promoting technical aid to industrial information centres will also be examined.





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