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Seminar on Industrial Information  
(for English Speaking African Countries)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6-15 November 1972

**PAPER ON INDUSTRIAL INFORMATION SERVICES**  
**IN ETHIOPIA**<sup>1/</sup>

by

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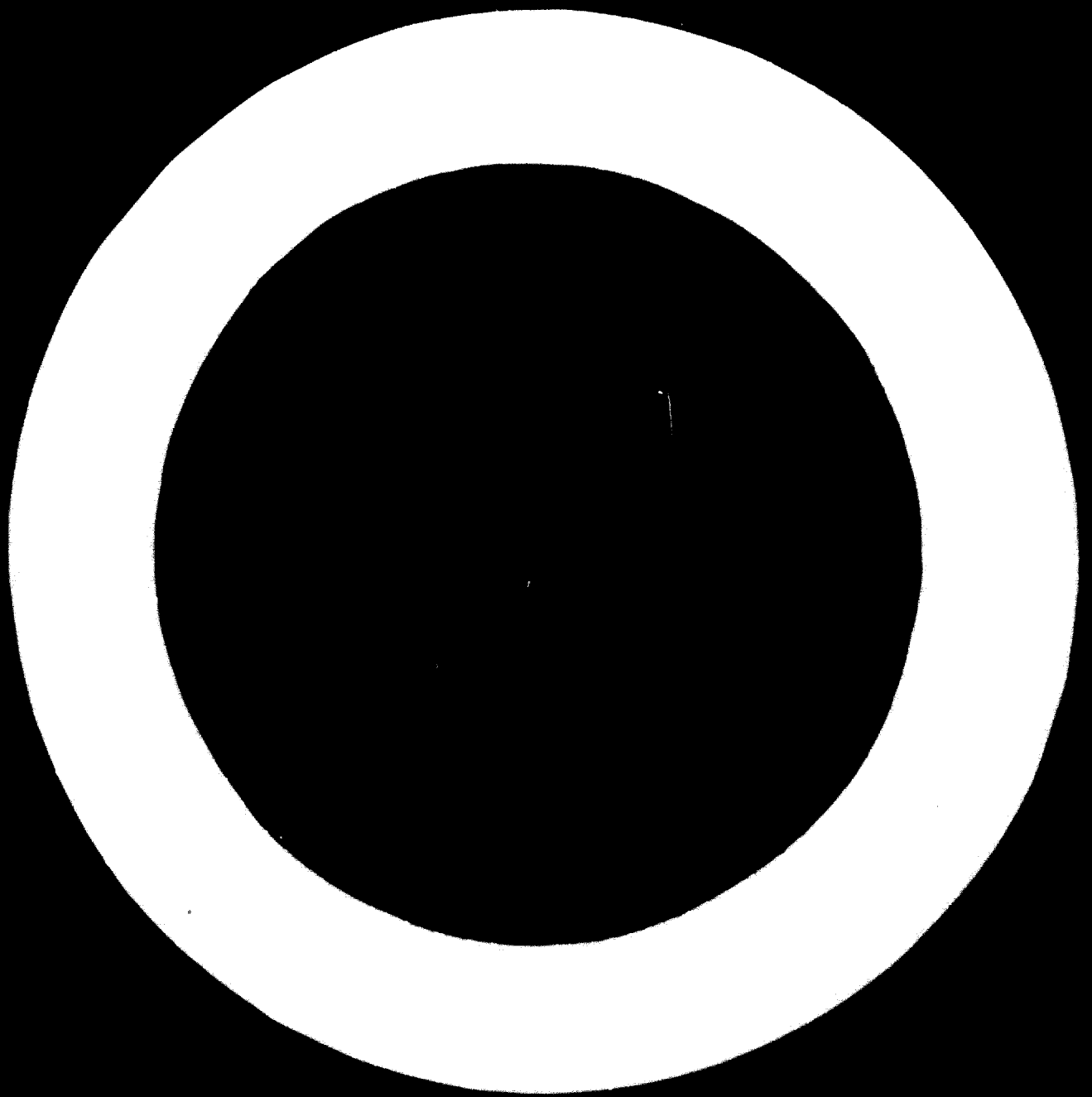
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<sup>1/</sup> The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the secretariat of UNIDO.

We regret that some of the pages in the microfiche copy of this report may not be up to the proper legibility standards, even though the best possible copy was used for preparing the master fiche.



For a balanced economic growth, a rapid industrialization programme coupled with modern agricultural development is one of the first priorities of most developing countries in their struggle for economic independence. However, the aim of rapid industrialization is in many cases retarded by various economic problems that naturally crop up with the industrialization programme of any given country. The non-availability of an efficient and practically useful industrial information system is among the many problems to be mentioned in this respect. It is obvious that without knowledge or access to technical, scientific and social information, such as production processes and methods, production means, product specifications and standards, market knowledge, etc. an industrialization programme remains only a wishful thinking.

The developing countries are aware of the importance of an up-to-date and efficient industrial information service for the industrialisation of their respective countries and are taking the issue seriously. However, one must face the fact that the very low level of economic development in the developing countries is by itself a limiting factor that retards the setting up of an adequate and efficient information system. The problem is associated with lack of adequate money, material and expertise.

In Ethiopia the problem is being tackled from different angles. To carry out the heavy task of economic development more effectively, the Government found it appropriate to create a special agency responsible for the economic planning of the country. In this respect the Planning Commission was set up in 1958. From the standpoint of industrial information service, the Commission is broadly responsible for assessing the needs of the country and by identifying the needs and priorities of the country, it prepares a national economic development plan. Associated with its planning function, the Commission is responsible for identifying and recommending the services that would be required with the industrialization programme.

In this respect the different Government Ministries and Agencies are responsible for the carrying out and implementation of the various policies and programmes set out in the national economic plan and to serve as centres of industrial informations in their respective field. To some extent where the Planning Commission sees the need for additional and special information centres, it will recommend the same in its economic planning. Among the recent ones established in this respect are to be mentioned the Ethiopian Standards Institute and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Management. Broadly all the following organizations could be considered to be disseminating different industrial informations in Ethiopia.

- 1) The Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism
- 2) The Central Statistics Office
- 3) The Technical Agency
- 4) The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce
- 5) The Ethiopian Standards Institute
- 6) The Institute of Agricultural Research
- 7) The Centre for Entrepreneurship & Management

From the standpoint of disseminating industrial information services the functions of the above agencies may be summarized as follows:

1) The Ministry of Commerce

Among other things, this Ministry formulates rules and regulations concerning investment and disseminates the same through its various agencies to organisations and individuals interested in such information. In addition to this other information relating to existing industries may be available from the Ministry.

2) The Central Statistical Office

This office is the country's main statistical organ, operating under the Planning Commission and tries to avail statistical figures in almost all aspects of economic and social developments. The annual statistical abstract published by the office contains such data as population growth, industrial production, employment, consumer and wholesale prices, figures on imports and exports, livestock, agricultural production, education, etc.

3) The Technical Agency

This agency again operates under the Planning Commission and its main function is concerned with periodic diagnosis of Ethiopian industries with the aim of providing the background material required before considering more specific

studies. It is also involved in identification of industrial projects justifying further study and also in preparation of prefeasibility studies for industries or for particular industrial projects and to avail information on the same.

4) The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce

This organization can be regarded as the main link between Ethiopia and outside world in supplying information to and from about products, producers, commercial and industrial activities, etc. It prepares and publishes annually investment guides, directory of industries and trade directory. It has a small library of its own.

5) The Ethiopian Standards Institute

The activity of the Institution involves general surveys and investigations to determine standardization needs and to prepare relevant national standards in different industrial and agricultural branches and to avail information on the same.

6) The Institute of Agricultural Research

This institute based on the findings of its various research centres in the country disseminates information concerning modern agricultural practices and to a limited extent advises individuals or groups on how to adapt the same.

7) The Centre for Entrepreneurship & Management

This Centre is involved in the dissemination of modern management techniques and practices by way of conducting various trainings, seminars, discussions and also by providing practical consultancy services. It also publishes professional management magazines in which modern principles and practices of management are dealt with and discussed. In expanding the services of the centre it is foreseen that the centre would be more involved in the preparation of feasibility studies both on request and on its own. The centre has also a small library of its own.

There are many other private and public organizations rendering different bits of industrial information services. Among these to be mentioned is the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, which deals with matters relating to industrial relation and manpower analysis. A number of international organizations like the ECA, UNDP, Commercial Attaches of Embassies, Import-Export Companies, etc., are other big sources of industrial information that are frequently made use of in Ethiopia.

Concluding Remarks

To fulfil the need of an accelerated industrial development it is a prerequisite that industrial information should not only adequately be available but the access to them must be easy and efficient as well. This certainly calls constant evaluation, review and improvement of the present information system to adapt it to the growing need of the industry. There is always, of course, the problem of inadequacy of resources and expertise, but this has to be solved somehow or other alternatives have to be sought. Hopefully the present seminar will discuss this issue more in depth and may come out with a proposal on how the ECA countries may cooperate to establish common industrial information centres or to freely exchange information with each other from the resources available in each country. These plus the inquiry into the industrial information needs of the ECA countries would be some interesting points for discussion.



## ETHIOPIA


Reporting to the seminar about industrial information activities in Ethiopia, Mr. Admasu Hakonnen from the Technical Agency said that the Agency was responsible for appraising different industrial and agricultural projects so as to supply information not only to government but also to the private sector.

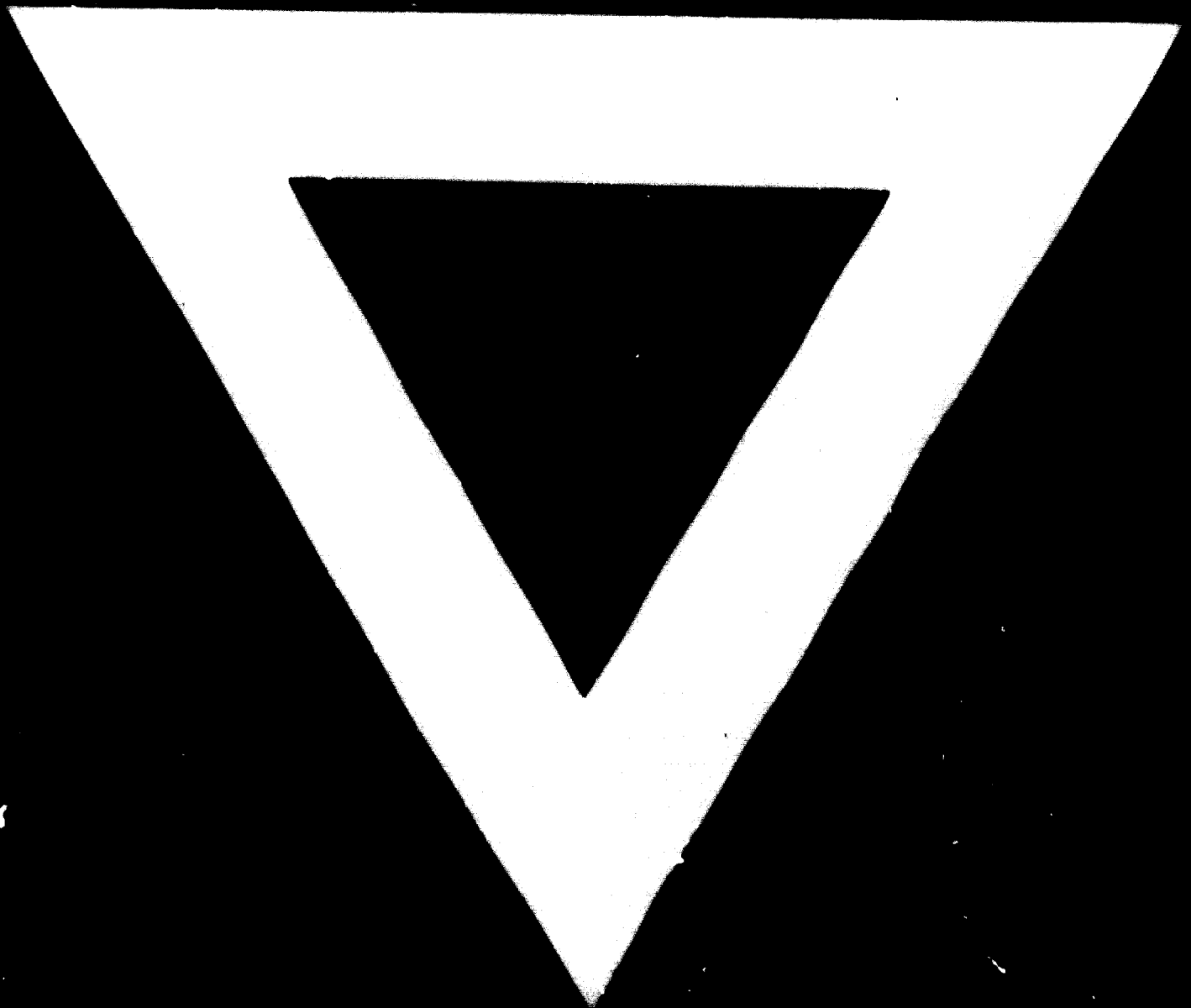
He said that there was the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce which acts as a bridge between foreign investors and the economic status of the country.

He enumerated a number of institutions from which industrial information could be obtained. Some of these were:

- (1) Chamber of Commerce which supplies information to investors, both foreign and local;
- (2) Ministry of Commerce and Industry which is responsible for legislating for the establishment of new industries;
- (3) Centre for Entrepreneurship Management. This brings together industrial managers to advise and if need be train them on scientific methods of industrial management.
- (4) The Ethiopian Standard Institute is responsible for the standardization of different Ethiopian commodities, mainly for export, to meet world standards.
- (5) The Agricultural Research Institute is responsible for promoting agricultural industries.
- (6) The Statistical Office compiles statistical data both from already established industries and by its own independent means.

Ethiopia has an edge over many African countries in that Addis Ababa, the capital, is the seat of numerous UN organizations as well as embassies. This makes exchanges of information relatively simple.

- Problems:
- (1) There is a dire need for a unified industrial information system.
  - (2) Some information is distorted by established industries - giving wrong data to protect themselves against the taxman. So a problem arises as to how to obtain accurate information to help researchers.
  - (3) There is a need and a problem to ascertain as to what the public considers as the most important information.
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