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UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

FINAL REPORT ON THE
FIRST GHANA INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY FAIR
INDUTECH '86

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Within the framework of the project

UC/GHA/85/248

"Assistance in the Organization of the
1st Industry and Technology Fair "Indutech 86"

MISSION TO GHANA - 16 to 23 August 1986

I. Introduction

My third mission to Ghana on behalf of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), within the framework of Project UC/GHA/85/248, commenced on the 16th of August and ended exactly one week later. The primary purpose of this trip was to consult with the Ghanaian officials who were responsible for organizing the 1st INDUSTRY & TECHNOLOGY FAIR - "INDUTECH '86" in order to determine what follow-up efforts could realistically be undertaken by them.

The basis for these discussions centered on a report which I had written for UNIDO in connection with my two prior visits to Ghana 6 months earlier in connection with the organization and functioning of the INDUTECH '86 Fair. In that report, I made a number of recommendations which I felt the Ghanaian authorities might wish to consider implementing as a means for improving future INDUTECH Fairs. At the same time, it was my intention to offer them - within that context - a general framework for moving ahead on a broad front in the industrial trade fair field.

It was readily apparent to me that because of the tremendous success the Ghanaian authorities enjoyed from the 1st INDUTECH Fair they were very anxious to develop a number of new trade fairs in the near future. They realized that

actually takes for inexperienced Ghanaian firms to do business on an international basis. Moreover, in addition it appeared that the Ghanaian authorities were interested in the sort of immediate feedback Ghanaian producers would get from potential clients of their products, from traders - both local and foreign - as well as the general public. This kind of opportunity for feedback on questions of price, quality, packaging, transport availability, technical appropriateness, etc. should help producers to better serve their present and, more importantly, potential clients.

II. Events Leading to INDUTECH '86

In order to address the key question - where do we go from here after INDUTECH '86 - I feel it is important to recount the economic context and events which led to the decision to hold INDUTECH '86. An understanding of these events is important if one is to assess the organization and frequency of future trade fairs in the context of Ghana's economic strategy for development.

Soon after Ghana became independent in 1957, the Government launched an industrialization policy which was based primarily on import substitution, with particular emphasis on replacing finished imported consumer goods with locally produced ones. To be able to realize such a goal, the country had to not only import all of the necessary capital goods, but also technical expertise and management skills.

tackling Ghana's long-term industrial development requirements. After some 20 years of experimentation with various industrial development strategies, there is every indication that the economic recovery program launched by the Ghanaian Government in April 1983 and now in its fourth year is bearing fruit. This realistic program takes into account both what is feasible and possible.

To be able to carry out these objectives, the Government of Ghana has established new mechanisms in an effort to acquire foreign technology on better terms and conditions. The country's new INVESTMENT CODE is designed to expedite this process, and towards this end the authorities are pursuing a vigorous recruitment campaign under the direction of Ghana's newly constituted GHANA INVESTMENT CENTRE.

Besides refurbishing and upgrading their existing industrial facilities, the Government has also opted to develop selected industrial sectors which are deemed vital to their national interests. Food processing is high on the list, not only because of the obvious need to meet the country's nutritional requirements and help insure its basic food security, but also because of its direct impact on agricultural production, rural development, industrialization, employment generation, and international trade.

managed industrial trade fair could readily serve their investment promotion interests and satisfy a number of their technology transfer requirements.

In the case of INDUTECH '86, however, the main concern of the organizers was to have a successful national fair attended by as many people from throughout the country as possible. Coming as it did after so many years of economic recession and privation, INDUTECH '86 was designed to restore national pride, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment to the Ghanaian people. In my view, this fair succeeded admirably in accomplishing all of the principal objectives set for it.

In the various classifications used to describe different types of exhibitions, INDUTECH '86 was what one would call a major "General Fair" or "Horizontal Fair". In a fair of this kind, all sorts of consumer and industrial goods are exhibited rather than concentrating a narrow industrial sub-sector which is usually referred to as a "Specialized Fair" or a "Vertical Fair". INDUTECH '86 was organized to appeal to the general public of Ghana at all levels, i.e. provincial, regional, and national. While the INDUTECH '86 Fair had a good deal of prestige value as a General Fair and was certainly beneficial commercially and as a means of information dispersion to the Ghanaian public, the Fair had only limited commercial benefits in the wider international context both in terms of foreign exchange

B. How Lessons From INDUTECH '86 Could be Applied in the Future

The first discussions I had with the competent Ghanaian Government authorities on my third visit to Accra for a review of the INDUTECH '86 Fair convinced me that such a Fair would probably not be held again for a period of 3 to 4 years. The Ghanaian officials had concluded that to successfully stage another national fair of the same order would require considerable more advance planning than was given to INDUTECH '86. Furthermore, they felt that it was incumbent upon them to carefully evaluate the results of various investigations now underway by the GHANA INVESTMENT CENTRE, CSIR, the Registrar General, the Public Agreements Board, the Technology Consultancy Centre, and other various research organizations and university groups who were engaged in a comprehensive effort aimed at strengthening Ghana's technological capacity and how INDUTECH '86 and future trade fairs might facilitate this goal.

While the Ghanaian authorities have decided to postpone having another "general" fair like INDUTECH '86 for 3 or 4 years, it does appear that they are anxious to pursue a policy involving the organization of several "specialized" industrial trade fairs aimed at attracting large numbers of foreign businessmen specifically concerned with the fairs' areas of specialization. Those sectors singled out for specialized trade fairs should be consistent with the

also to find an agent for importation and distribution), the presence of numerous foreign exhibitors could offer the country some unique investment promotion opportunities.

IV. Creation of a Ghana Trade Fair Authority

A. Organizational Attributes of a Proposed Ghana Trade Fair Authority

The idea of creating a GHANA TRADE FAIR AUTHORITY as an effective instrument for furthering the nation's industrial development was discussed in my earlier visits to the country. It must be said, however, that this was certainly not a new idea where the Ghanaian authorities were concerned, but rather seemed to be a subject which was on the minds of quite a few of the members of the national organizing committee of INDUTECH '86 who I interviewed during the time of the Fair.

It was quite clear to me though that INDUTECH '86 certainly did a great deal to help reinforce the idea for establishing such an Authority, and also highlighted the rather special role that private groups in the country like the ASSOCIATION OF GHANA INDUSTRIES could effectively play in any such future undertakings of this kind. In fact, the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology indicated to me on my last visit that steps had already been taken to create a special "Trade Fair Desk" in his ministry. I interpreted this to mean that this was the

it should be expected that the Ghana Government authorities would permit the GTFA to have enough hard currencies at its disposal to enable it to effectively carry out its foreign operations.

3.) In order to give the GTFA the official recognition it needs and deserves, it would need to be officially "Chartered" by the Government of Ghana and also have its functions and responsibilities formally enumerated by the appropriate legal authorities in the country.

4.) It is my opinion that the GTFA should have overall responsibility for operating and managing the entire Accra trade fair site, including responsibility for the maintenance of all fair site buildings as well as the exhibition grounds. Accordingly, all events taking place at the Accra fair grounds would come under the jurisdiction of the GTFA and all revenues and expenses would be managed by the GTFA as well.

5.) It is proposed that the legal agreement launching the GTFA would run initially for a period of 5 years with provisions for an immediate 5 year extension, provided, of course, the Authority's performance record is deemed satisfactory.

6.) The GTFA would have sole authority to represent Ghana abroad in all trade fair activities, although the

inviting prospective foreign buyers, investors, and other concerned persons to such national exhibitions.

B. Technical Skills Development Programme for Managers of the Ghana Fair Trade Authority

As a means of enabling GTFA staff to gain the requisite technical skills for successfully establishing and operating such an Authority, I recommended to the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Science & Technology, and his staff, that they consider developing a close working relationship with the Dutch fair authorities in Utrecht, i.e. TRADE MART/UTRECHT. The Utrecht fair authorities, in my estimation, have one of Europe's best trade fair programmes. It seemed to me that it should be possible to launch such cooperation, in which initially a key official of the GFTA, i.e. either the administrator or the chief of operations, could spend at least 6 months to 1 year with his counterparts in Utrecht, learning as much as possible how they run their operation. This could be followed over the succeeding months and years by well arranged visits of specialized personnel from the GFTA to Utrecht in order to learn about specific technical areas, i.e. preparation and distribution of promotional literature, stand construction techniques, packing, shipping and transport, catalogue materials, and other matters.

Since the reaction of Ghanaian officials to this suggestion I made during my third visit was quite positive,

recommendations which the Secretary might wish to incorporate into his own final report on INDUTECH '86.

During this time, I also used the opportunity to hold preliminary discussions with senior officials in the GHANA INVESTMENT CENTRE, the NATIONAL INVESTMENT BANK, and with Secretary Acquah and his staff concerning the feasibility of transferring selected "development-oriented" technologies from a newly industrialized nation like Thailand to Ghana. As that I had already been given formal approval by the responsible Thai Government officials to such a collaboration, subsequent to the holding of INDUTECH '86, I was interested to see whether the officials in Ghana were also willing to seriously explore such arrangements. All indications were that the Ghanaian officials were eager to move ahead on this initiative, and before I left Accra, I received confirmation of this from the head of the GHANA INVESTMENT CENTRE, Mr. J. Bentum-Williams, who approached the World Bank on this matter. The reaction of the World Bank has been favorable to this initiative, and a telex to this effect was sent by the World Bank to the appropriate Ghanaian authorities for their endorsement.