

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE LEVEL MANPOWER  
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, OCTOBER 10-12, 1962

This is a Report on the International Conference on Middle Level Manpower held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during October, 10-12, 1962. Jamaica sent the Hon. Edward Seaga, Minister of Development and Welfare, accompanied by Mr. W.G.Woodham of the Ministry of Labour, as delegates to the International Conference on Middle Level Manpower.

The Conference was convened to examine the role of human skills in the process of economic development. Vice-President Lyndon Johnson of the United States and Vice-President Emanuel Pelaez of the Phillipines, were unanimously elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. It was serviced by an elaborate Secretariat drawn from staff members of the Peace Corps, the White House, the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Department of Labour. The proceedings took the form of major addresses, symposiums and technical papers. In all some 153 delegates participated drawn from 43 countries. English, Spanish and French were the official languages. Observers from a number of International agencies were present as well. It was the largest Conference called to focus attention on one of the problems of economic development outside of the United Nations and its agencies.

The Conference grew out of the heightened interest of the developing nations in the crucial role which manpower plays in the development process. From this interest, backed by the experience of the U.S. Government in its own Technical Assistance Programme, the U.S. decided to convene a high level international conference to consider these problems.

The Conference first took cognisance of the tremendous strides that have been made in measuring over long periods of time the increases in total national output ( and even in specific sectors such as agriculture) that can only be partially explained by increases in the labour force and in the amount of physical capital and land available. An important contributing factor affecting economic growth then is that which is generated by the education of the labour force, by the adaptation of new methods in transmitting skills and in the development and use of new techniques. The Conference had before it a great wealth of information of the experience of the U.S. in measuring these factors over the last 50 years. Comparison were also available from data drawn from Argentina, Venezuela and other countries as well, all of which were sufficiently cogent to support the view that investment in education and training directly brings at

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least as high a rate of return in terms of national product as investment in other types of factors of production.

The Conference discussed at great length the experience of different countries in developing manpower programmes as part and parcel of their plan for economic and social development. There was no universal approach which emerged from these deliberations. What came to light was an awareness that economic development requires that manpower be trained in the light of fullest assessment of future needs and that this requires in turn that Governments assign this responsibility for assessing human resources for surveying and defining future needs on some central authority representing all the interests involved in developing an effective manpower programme. Technical papers by Jamaica, India, Israel and Nigeria gave case studies of approaches by these countries in planning for the development of their manpower resources.

It was in the light of discussion on these topics that it was realised that the demand for trained manpower often increases at a rate faster than the growth in the gross national product and this in turn exerts a severe strain on the existing pool of middle level manpower such as teachers, community development workers, technicians, nurses, craftsmen and so on. The demand for workers of this type in all countries was particularly urgent. Ways and means had to be found therefore, of augmenting the supply either by means of extensive training schemes or by means of voluntary assistance through national and international channels.

It was realised of course, that training to meet middle level manpower had serious implications on the content of general education. This had to be geared in turn to meet the demands of the community which was also changing as modernisation and development gained momentum. The Conference explored the possibility of the extent to which private enterprises can contribute to middle level manpower development in new countries and heard of successful experiments of private enterprises in a number of countries in Latin America (Mexico, Venezuela and Columbia) in Holland and in Germany as well.

Apart from the assessment of present and future needs and the content of specific types of training, the Conference examined the motivational forces that influenced individuals who are being trained, and the measures that can be taken to stimulate these forces. The experiences of the U.S. Peace Corps and of other similar types of voluntary assistance programmes in other countries such as Canada were drawn on.

The Conference realised that this is an area in which further study had to be done before training programmes in developing countries



can respond to the various factors that motivate individuals as they acquire new knowledge.

Of immediate concern to the Conference was how to solve this international shortage of manpower particularly in the middle level fields that was being experienced in most of the developing countries. Could voluntary assistance contribute if at all to supplement the massive programmes of technical assistance that had been mounted for many years by individual nations and by international organisations as well?

It was in the general discussion on the role of voluntary assistance that many countries announced intentions of setting up similar volunteer programmes which would either give assistance outside their borders or to special groups inside their countries. Germany, Norway, Denmark, Columbia, El Salvador, Belgium, Honduras, Chile and the Phillipines gave some detail of their own programmes in this field.

The Conference discussed the special measures that were needed for speedy diffusion of knowledge and heard of the innovations of other countries. Great interest was displayed in the teaching methods of the U.S. Peace Corps and the special training within military establishments in Israel in peace time skills, and the use of such educational media as radio, television and teaching machines.

Jamaica was very fortunate in being able to contribute in a significant way to the Conference and to benefit from the contact and exchanges in the very important areas of manpower planning and in the field of technical assistance. Although Jamaica was the smallest nation represented and had one of the smallest delegations present at the Conference, it was able to advance the view-point of many of the developing countries and to put before the Conference the special problems encountered by new nations in formulating programmes for social and economic development. The contribution was in the form of responses from the floor after major addresses by high ranking Cabinet Ministers and officials of other countries and international agencies, and from the symposium discussion led by the Hon. Edward Seaga, on "What the less developed countries had to build a middle level manpower".

Mr. W.G. Woodham of the Ministry of Labour, presented one of the 31 technical papers that was before the Conference which was very favourably commented on by the Secretariat and other delegations. It provided a simplified model of the Jamaican experience giving the pre-requisites and the step-by-step approach to the development of a manpower programme. A request was made by the World Bank to include this paper in training manuals as part of their training programmes for the developing countries.



The Jamaican delegation was also favoured to have the Conference adopt a resolution asking the continuing Secretariat of the Conference to study and devise techniques, standardize the nomenclature for the measurement of the returns that investment in education can make to the process of development and to make this information available to all the participating countries. This resolution was carried and with the agreement of the Conference was referred to the International Labour Office for its consideration and appropriate action.

The Conference established an international Secretariat with certain limited objectives to function in Washington for one year. The Jamaican delegation was instrumental in having the conditions under which the Secretariat will function modified to require a written, positive assent of the majority of the participating countries two months before the end of the period before the life of the Secretariat can be extended beyond this point. It should be noted that the Secretariat's function will include the winding-up of the work of the Conference including the publication of the technical papers and reports, to serve as an international "clearing house" for the exchange of ideas and experience on the use of volunteers in the work of development, and to assist nations in developing middle level skills for purposes of development.

The Conference provided the Jamaican delegation with an opportunity to learn a great deal about the availability of aid and the different forms of technical assistance that can be provided by different countries. Most of the delegates who attended this Conference were either high-level Cabinet ministers or officials responsible for technical assistance or experts in manpower development and planning.

The Jamaican delegation worked hard to explore vital sources of assistance that had previously been unknown to this country and held discussions with various delegations concerning the possibility of particular types of assistance.

Mr. W.G. Woodham was invited by the U.S. Government to Washington D.C. on a Leader Grant for a period of two weeks to do some follow-up work in connection with the Conference.

The Government is therefore asked to take note of this Report of the Conference in anticipation of further developments in the field of manpower planning and development and technical assistance which are likely to flow from the contacts and exchanges which are made possible by this Conference. The Jamaican

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delegation on behalf of the Government of Jamaica has expressed thanks to the U.S. Government for the invitation and the courtesies extended to them during the Conference.

EDWARD SEAGA  
Minister of Development and Welfare.  
7th December, 1962