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# THE PRAGMA CORPORATION

REPORT ON SHORT-TERM CONSULTANCY

BY

ANTHONY K. YEBOAH

USAID/THE PRAGMA CORPORATION

CONTRACT NO. AFR-0070-C-00-5003-00

SEPTEMBER 27, 1985 - OCTOBER 26, 1985

KINSHASA, ZAIRE

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**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this consultancy was to provide the Division of Planning and Strategy, Service d'Etudes et Planification, with supervision of post-graduate research. It involved the initial supervision of activities related to the research of Zairian students returning from universities in the United States. Presently, there are two such students - Cit. Nseye Mara and Cit. Kule Sisko. They have been in Kinshasa since June 1985 awaiting a thesis supervisor.

**PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES**

The consultancy began with a conference with Dr. Mohammad Fatoorehchie of the Pragma Corporation in Falls Church, Virginia. In addition to the scope of work of this short-term assignment, the issue of long-term assignment for a Field Thesis Supervisor was discussed. Specifically, we discussed the possibility of a sub-contract between the Pragma Corporation and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University for my services as a Field Thesis Supervisor. Dr. Fatoorehchie indicated that if Dr. David Shapiro, Pragma Chief of Party in Zaire, was willing to accept this idea of a subcontract, he would go along with it. It was, therefore, decided that a meeting should be held between Dr. Shapiro, Mr. Ron Daniel, the Aid Project Officer and myself upon my arrival in Kinshasa. This meeting took place at which time all parties agreed to the idea of subcontracting. However, at the time of writing this report, the details of such an arrangement are still being worked out. It is hoped that an agreement can be reached between all parties involved to enable me to return to Kinshasa, Zaire, in December 1985. This will prevent further delays in the writing and completion of theses.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NECESSARY FOLLOW-UPS**

I arrived in Kinshasa on September 29, 1985, and was met by Dr. David Shapiro. The next day I met with Cit. Nseye Mara and discovered that he had already designed a tentative questionnaire to interview about 60 farmers in the Bandundu region of Zaire. This region is the focal point of his study. He is studying the role of different kinds of uncertainty - farm gate prices, productivity, etc., - on the choice of mixed-cropping and single-cropping systems by farmers in this region. His questionnaire was extensively revised. In addition to technical questions dealing with crop and livestock production and marketing activities, questions that will provide information on the profile of these farm families were included in the questionnaire. The number of potential farmers to be interviewed was also increased to 130. This was to insure that enough data points would be obtained after adjusting for missing values.

I also decided to travel with student to the region in order to supervise the pretesting of the questionnaire. However, due to a mechanical problem with our vehicle, I had to return to Kinshasa the next day without being able to provide the supervision. It is expected that my absence during the initial stages of the survey would not create serious biases in responses obtained since the questionnaire was extensively reviewed. The survey is expected to take 42 days for completion. I am scheduled to leave for the United States before the arrival of the student

at Kinshasa. Hence, further instructions as how to proceed after the survey were given to him. These included coding of data and other relevant transformations. The importance of the retrievability of the data for future work was stressed. To this end, the data are to be stored both on paper and on computer diskettes with extra copies made. Finally, a tentative "Table of Contents" for the thesis was discussed.

Cit. Kule Sisko was, perhaps, on some kind of extended leave. However, I was able to meet with him on three occasions during which times we discussed his thesis proposal. He is writing a thesis on the possible effects of production subsidies and foreign exchange reserves on calories and protein intake from the consumption of selected commodities. The student had already written a 60-page document covering several aspects of his thesis there were sections on introduction, hypotheses and objectives, models and data. A lot of work still needs to be done and a list of suggestions have been made. However, at the time of writing this report, Cit. Kule Sisko has not been available for us to discuss my comments and recommendations. It is hoped that such a meeting can take place before my scheduled departure on Friday, October 25, 1985.

## CONSTRAINTS, PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Constraints and problems were basically limited to three areas:

- 1) Office Space and Furniture,
- 2) Typing Services, and,
- 3) Transportation.

### 1. Office Space and Furniture

My needs for office space and furniture were adequately met but the same cannot be said for the two students. Neither of them has assigned desk and chair. Cit. Nseye Mara is currently using furniture and space already assigned to another worker in the bureau who happens to be on a mission to Egypt. The situation is likely to worsen as more participants return from the United States. In fact, one is expected to arrive in Kinshasa by the end of October. It is therefore necessary that steps are taken to provide space and furniture to facilitate the writing and supervision of theses.

### 2. Typing Services

Typing needs for this consultancy was ably handled by Cit. Batantu. Apparently, she is the only typist at the Service d'Etudes et Planification that can type in English. However, she is also assigned to typing materials in French. Hence, there is a possibility of her being pre-occupied with other

assignments and not having time to work in thesis-related materials. Again, this situation is more likely to arise as the number of returning participants increases. It is therefore recommended that Cit. Batantu be assigned solely to typing thesis-related materials to ensure timely completion of theses.

### 3. Transportation

Transportation was not available to me during this consultancy due to shortage of vehicles. However, with the arrival of the Nissan Patrol and expected delivery of a Land Rover in the near future, it is hoped that transportation will be available upon my return in December 1985.

On the same issue of transportation, it is recommended that students and/or thesis supervisor on missions be provided with good transportation, i.e., mechanically sound vehicles to avoid breakdowns while on the road. For example, the vehicle carrying Cit. Mara and myself on our mission to Kikwit in Bandandu region broke down right in the middle of the journey. The rest of the trip was made on a public transportation with all the accompanying dangers. Of course these things happen frequently especially in Africa. However, efforts should be made to reduce the probability of occurrence. In this particular incidence, the driver claimed he alerted the project mechanic but nothing was done about the problem. I am still not sure of the reason or reasons why.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Dr. David Shapiro, Mr. George Conde, Mr. Ron Daniel, Cit. Mubenga and all the

other workers at the bureau who contributed to, what I think, was a successful completion of this assignment.