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Rural Planning
"RP16" Component

The Rural Planning Project

Rural Planning Section

Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs

A mid-term evaluation

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FOREWORD

Inevitably an evaluation of an advisory project within a governmental context finds that the symbiotic relationship between the project and the context makes a clear-cut distinction impossible. In this instance the evaluation finds - or accepts - that there are historical, structural, attitudinal, and manpower factors that have impeded, and will continue to impede, the efforts of the Government of Kenya to implement a rural development policy that has very strong inputs from planning at the district level in the short-term and is to be largely determined by participatory decentralized planning in the long-term. Without a major effort by Government to remove these impediments the ultimate success of the undertaking cannot be assured.

At the same time the evaluation finds that the advisory and operational work of the technical assistance personnel have been, with very minor questions about emphasis or priorities that may seem presumptuous from an outsider, both quantitatively (to the extent advice can be measured) and qualitatively all that could reasonably be expected. The project has been staffed by advisors who are competent, committed, and industrious, and who have worked well together and with their Kenyan colleagues.

These comments are fundamental to a proper understanding of the following report which may seem to focus on the constraints affecting, rather than the accomplishment of, the rural planning project.

1. INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference for this evaluation are appended to the report and contain the statements of project objectives as outlined in some detail in the contract between Harvard and the Government of Kenya and the agreement between the Government of Kenya and USAID. While the reviewer is encouraged "to interpret his scope of work broadly", the review specifically is to include:

- i. an evaluation of the degree to which the project purposes are being achieved in both the short and long terms;
- ii. an identification and appraisal of the constraints encountered by the project with suggestions for their removal; and
- iii. suggestions for changes in the operation, structure or budget of the project.

While the terms of reference would seem to offer an ideal organization for the report, the truth is that all aspects of the project - Objectives, constraints and possible remedies - are inseparable. As Lord Maitland once said "he who would write a piece of history must feel that his first sentence tears a seamless web." So it is with an assessment of this project within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs (MEPCA), although I will try to organize this report around those terms.

I must say at the outset that it is my firm purpose not to question an apparent commitment of the Government of Kenya to implement a policy of decentralized planning, or to attempt to determine exactly what is meant by the policy. Nor is it my intention to examine the feasibility of decentralized planning in Kenya. My objective is to attempt to look at the contribution made to the implementation of those policies by a group of technical advisers provided to Kenya through Harvard with funds voted by USAID. Inevitably the evaluation will touch on Government commitment, policy or capacity,

and equally inevitably suggestions for change will be directed to Government as well as project. But to the maximum extent possible I hope to follow the self-denying ordinance mentioned at the outset.

The project began when the Senior Advisor arrived in August 1976. A second reached Nairobi in February 1977, and the third began work in September 1977. In all, only six adviser-months were lost between the planned and actual arrival time of the three advisors. By January 1979, therefore, the project had consumed 66 man months. In addition, two short-term associates have spent a total of 24 months with the project. The associates have worked exclusively on the district planning exercise, and it is estimated that about 35-40 of the 66 months of the long-term advisors have been given to the district planning exercise, about ten months to the National Plan, and the rest to a variety of activities including the Arid and Semi-Arid land projects, and general advisory services within the Rural Planning Section and the Ministry generally.

II PROJECT PURPOSES

Put most broadly the purpose of the Rural Planning Section project was to assist the Government of Kenya in implementing rural development programmes which would help to achieve absolute and more equitable increases in rural income and employment. The means chosen in this project was to strengthen the planning, co-ordinating and supervisory capacity of the Rural Planning Section in the Ministry of Economic Planning. More specifically the advisers were to assist the Ministry in building up its capacity (largely through the RPS) to:

- i. design and implement a system of decentralized and participatory planning, including the identification of necessary data needs, and to plan and co-ordinate the production of district plans;
- ii. implement and administer rural development programmes and (to facilitate the above)
- iii. design and implement an appropriate system for project identification and evaluation at the district level.

In addition, it was recognized that the advisors would participate in the work of the Section and the Ministry in a number of other ways, including assistance in the preparation of the fourth national plan, devising appropriate training programmes for officers engaged in rural development activities and providing other advice to senior officers in the Ministry including the Permanent Secretary.

A. The Rural Planning Section

The Rural Planning Section (RPS) did not spring forth fully clothed from some Benthamite pen. First created as the Regional and Physical Planning Unit to house the Special Rural Development Programme, it then became the Rural Planning Unit as its functions expanded to include other rural development programmes and the responsibility for the provincial planning offices and district planning.

Coincidental with the beginning of the rural planning project was the selection of a head of a unit later to be upgraded to a Section with anticipated expanded functions. However, it was a year before the head was confirmed in his position as Principal Economist and the Section status approved. It was in the RPS that the advisors provided by Harvard were to work under the general direction of the head of the Section and the Permanent Secretary of MEPCA.

Even given the anticipated expansion of its role, the RPS was rapidly overtaken by events. By the end of 1978 it was clear that the Ministry (if not Government as a whole) regarded the RPS as responsible for the coordination of all rural development activities,

including decentralized planning; the rural development programmes traditionally within its purview, all sectoral programmes at the district level(1); and the district or regional projects within the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands programme (such as Machakos and a dozen or so others proposed). In addition the RPS has recently taken

Coordination and Training Unit, responsible in general for providing the RPS with a capacity (an internal document stated) "to coordinate the various extension services, and monitor and evaluate all rural services, institution and programmes.

The role of the advisers, an Annex A of the Harvard contract stated, is "to strengthen the capacity of the Rural Planning Division to deal with those specialized functions assigned to it and to train the Division's staff so that foreign expert assistance is no longer required". While the senior advisor was to be familiar with administrative systems, a second advisor was specifically to be recruited as an organization and information specialist and was to have "primary responsibility for analyzing and suggesting those organizational systems that will be most cost effective for carrying out the programmes that are the responsibility of the division". By January 1978, despite the preoccupation with the district planning exercise, the organization specialist, with consultation, had prepared a lengthy analysis of the Section's mission, a breakdown by functions,

- (1) The charge to monitor all development programmes at the local level is placed upon the District Development Committees in the draft of the Fourth Plan, and therefore involves the District Development Officers and the RPS.

an analysis of weakness, and proposals for an efficient and effective organization and adequate staffing for the ever-expanding role of the Section.

The functions and tasks of the RPS were outlined as follows:

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

Tasks

- I. SUPERVISING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRICT PLANNING:
 - A. Coordinate and Direct RPS Officers
 - B. Coordinate and Direct Activities of Provincial Planning Office
 - C. Provide Professional Guidance and advice to DDC's
 - D. Provide Budget and Establishment Estimates for RPS
 - E. Primary Liaison to other Sections of MF
 - F. Primary Liaison to Planning Units in other Ministries
- II. PROMOTING AND COORDINATING ALL RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
 - A. Planning, Coordinating and Supervising Integrated Development Programmes
 - B. Planning, and Managing special Development projects.
 - C. Monitoring the Planning and Implementation of all projects in the Rural Areas by the various operating Ministries. (A proposed function)
 - D. Coordinating and Processing Rural Development Fund Applications
 - E. INSpecting and Auditing RDF Projects
- III. PROMOTING AND COORDINATING DISTRICT PLANNING
 - A. Preparing, publishing, and distributing District Development Plans
 - B. Providing District Planning Information
 - C. Reviewing Development Committee Minutes

IV PLANNING FOR SERVICE CENTRE DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE (Proposed Function)

- A. Monitoring and Evaluating the Development of Designated Service Centres and Growth Centres
- B. Reviewing and Coordinating Physical Planning in the Districts.
- C. Coordinating Urban Development Policy with Rural Development Programmes

V COORDINATING RURAL SERVICES AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONS

- A. Coordination the Provision of Extension Services (Proposed Function)
- B. Monitoring and Evaluating Rural Services. (Proposed function)
- C. Planning for initial, in-service, and long-term training of field officers

To which must be added the considerable time spent on:

- i. Responses to Parliamentary questions
- ii. Briefings for officials and politicians
- iii. Co-ordination of evaluation studies by external agencies.

The structure proposed for the section provides a convenient graphic view of the functions and general flow pattern.

The proposed reorganization called for the strengthening of the Section, increased staffing, and making the head of the largest of the four units, the Rural Development Unit, a Senior Planning Officer, The staff proposed to meet the demands on the Section as of January 1978 (and they have increased since) was sixteen, excluding support staff and advisors. At the moment the RPS is staffed with one Principal Economist, four planning officers (one on a two year educational leave) and three advisors, plus two officers and an advisor in the Rural Service Unit.

As field members of the Section there are in place Provincial Planning Officers in all provinces and Provincial Planning Assistants in six of the seven. In addition, as will be discussed later, the District Development Officers have major responsibilities to the Section for district planning and the monitoring of development activity.

At this moment while the general thrust of the organizational recommendations have been accepted in principle (and some minor structural and personnel recommendations implemented) the further strengthening the Section, the re-organization proposed, and the increased staffing have not been implemented, and with the shortage of staff are not likely to be within the lifetime of the project. (1)

B. Decentralized Planning

The commitment to the principle of some measure of decentralized planning is almost as old as the country. The rhetoric reaches back as far as African Socialism and appears in the first two development plans. It was only with the report of the Ndegwa Commission in 1971, however, that concrete proposals were recommended to create the government-wide mechanisms to enable it to be implemented. The subsequent history of the exercise is well known to all readers of this report, and has been adequately treated in the USAID project document Rural Planning Project: Kenya (April 28, 1976). Although progress was slow and intermittent, and the recommendations of the Ndegwa Report were not followed in some important particulars, by the summer of 1976 the following conditions prevailed:

- (1) Since the date of the report, the Government has moved to strengthen the Section, principally through increased staffing. The changes are outlined in Appendix C

- i) There were Provincial Planning Officers, Members of the Scheme of Service for Economists and responsible to the Ministry of Economic Planning, in all Provinces
- ii) Sessional Paper No.5 of 1974 had accepted the principle that the District should become the area for local development activity and administration, and that the posts of District Development Officer and District Planning Officer (as recommended in the Ndegwa Report) be established. It also accepted the recommendation that the District Development Committees be strengthened, chaired by the District Commissioner and composed of district heads of the operating ministries, Members of Parliament, officers of town and county councils, and representatives of appropriate voluntary agencies. District Development Committees were functioning in all districts.
- iii) District Development Officers were in place in thirteen districts and another eighteen had been recently recruited and were in training. By September 1977 (when the district planning exercise was to be launched) DDOs were in place in 27 districts and the remaining thirteen had been selected and were to be in place in March 1978. (Since then the positions have remained filled except for temporary vacancies caused by resignations or promotions). District Planning Officers have never been appointed.
- iv) District Plans for 1974-78 had been prepared in 1975-76. They consisted largely of descriptive material on the district and disaggregated data from the National Plan, and were mainly prepared in the Provincial Planning Offices and MOFP in Nairobi since there was no district machinery for their preparation in the district.
- v) The Rural Planning Unit, consisting of a senior advisor and two Kenyan junior economists, was about to be headed by an experienced Provincial Planning Officer (PPO), and there was a commitment to upgrade the unit into a Section

headed by a Principal Economist.

Despite this structure, which had promise but little else, the Government of Kenya had determined to embark on a district planning exercise to coincide with the preparation of the Fourth National Plan. It was realized that the commitment to base the fourth National Plan on district plans (found in the Third Plan para.1.102) could not be honoured for the 1979-83 Plan, but it was hoped that if deadlines could be met, district responses to disaggregated ministerial proposals and the identification of district projects and programmes could be fed into the national planning process.

Work began on the District Planning exercise with the simultaneous arrival of the Senior advisor and the head of the Rural Planning Section in August 1976. The decision had already been reached to prepare forty district plans as the National Plan was being prepared. It was an enormous undertaking. The section in the ministry was understaffed and inexperienced for the task; the full complement of advisors could not be expected in much less than a year; there were a dozen vacant DDO posts; and many DDOs were also unfamiliar with the task of preparing a comprehensive and, as it turned out, sophisticated district plan.

However, in the remarkably short time of less than twelve months, the first comprehensive district planning exercise was launched. Guidelines for an infrastructure inventory were circulated in June 1977; the publication of general guidelines followed in July (revised in October); an important circular was sent to the Permanent Secretaries of the operating ministries in July requesting a disaggregation of development and recurrent expenditures to the district level, output targets and employment indicators, and an identification of target groups; and a week-long seminar was held for DDOs and PPOs in September to familiarize them with the process.

The general guidelines, over the signature of the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Planning) indicated that the Ministry was determined to produce both the National Plan and the district plans by September 1978. It was admitted that "synthesis of the National Plan from district plans is still a long-range objective," but the government was "determined to take major steps to make the district planning exercise a vital part of the national planning process. District Development Committees will be asked to develop objectives, indicate sectoral and geographical priorities, and respond to ministerially suggested programmes. Time permitting, the operating ministries will reply to this district input and response".

The objective of the seminar for DDOs and PPOs was not only to run through the Planning strategy, but also to help the DDOs expand their conception of their own responsibilities - to become "plan conscious," to see their role as different from that of District Officers or another staff man in the office of the District Commissioner, to learn how to draw on the District Development Committee, and how to get members of the DDC to begin to think in terms of macro inter-sectoral planning rather than be mentally and professionally confined by the micro-project approach.

The strategy and deadlines called for the Baseline data to be prepared by December, 1977; district sectoral plans by February 1978; synthesis and interpretation by March; editing and final approval by September; and production in December 1978. The plans were to be submitted in three chapters - Chapter I was to provide an introduction, and background data in the form of a physical, demographic, and socio-economic profile of the district. Chapter II was to be composed of sectoral plans, divided into primary production; (agriculture, natural resources, commerce and industry, cooperative development, and tourism and wildlife); physical infrastructure (transport and roads, power and communication, service centres, and water development); and social services. Chapter III was to be a synthesis or an "Integrated District Plan" which would outline the strategies

for development, review the development thrust to date and the resource potential, examine the role of the Rural Development Fund, outline the major constraints, assess the expected impact of the plan, and make suggestions for improved planning in the future.

In the following weeks and months, the RPS prepared lengthy sets of instructions on each of the sections of the plan, in all a series of documents over an inch thick. The DDO was the central figure in the exercise. He was to prepare Chapter I. While Chapter II was to be prepared by sectoral working groups, the DDO was to bring the material together. The difficult Chapter III was also his responsibility, with the promised assistance of the PPO and the RPS. All drafts were to be forwarded to the PPO and RPS, who would feed their comments back to the DDO. When a final draft was ready, the DDO was instructed to place the plan before the DDC for its approval. The plan was then to go to the Provincial Development Committee for its approval, and was finally to reach the Ministry for final approval and publication.

Each of the five advisors was assigned a number of regionally compact districts to supervise. In principle there were Kenyan officers assigned as counterparts, either in the RPS or in the field. But in practice, with some exceptions, the real counterparting was between the DDOs and the advisors as work on the plans progressed.

The RPS attempted to provide data from the centre to assist in plan writing. Some of the promised (and essential) information has been provided, but the exercise has been hampered by the weakness of the data base (as with District Indicators) and the difficulty (or impossibility) of getting timely disaggregated expenditure plans or recurrent expenditures from many of the operating ministries.

The procedure implemented is detailed and thorough, and if successfully executed will result in the publication of forty District Plans of high quality. However, at the moment no plan is finished, most are in first or second draft, and few third chapters have reached the RPS. A random sample, supported by the judgement of the advisors, is that they range in quality from very promising to hopeless.

At this stage, however, some tentative conclusions can be reached:

1. The format for district planning devised by the advisors in consultation with Kenyan officers in the section was conceptually and in detail designed to provide both a process which would involve total district participation and production and lead to good district plans.
2. The amount and nature of data requested, however, was more than the field system and the central ministries could provide at this stage or in time. Some DDOs have also argued that the data requested was more than needed for district planning. (A position taken by some that provision of the material requested for a complete socio-economic profile and the identification of target groups was a three-year undertaking is as overstated as the position of the RPS that it should be relatively simple exercise, it seems to me)
3. Despite the circular from the DPS in July 1977 and the continuous attempts of advisors and Kenyan officers to secure the information, many ministries either simply did not have the disaggregated data available or were unwilling to spend the time and energy making it available. Thus the constant criticism from the field that the RPS had not lived up to its promise to provide district disaggregated data.
4. By training, experience, attitude and general overall ability, some DDOs are probably incapable of writing a final draft, and others are only marginally capable.

5. The District Planning exercise would not yet seem to have a high priority in the field, and many DDOs have faced almost insuperable problems in securing the whole-hearted or even half-hearted cooperation of district sectoral heads, and the office of the District Commissioner.

6. The quite proper diversion of the three full-time advisors from the District Planning exercise over the past six months has led to understandable delays in feedback from the RPS. In some instances this had led to a certain amount of cynicism and demoralisation among conscientious DDOs.

7. There has been difficulty getting sustained Kenyan officer participation in the district planning exercise at the centre. While staff have been involved in the RPS, their participation has been limited by their numbers, educational leaves, secondment to other duties or part-time association with the exercise. As a result there has been a greater dependence on the advisors than is desirable and replication of the exercise would be difficult without their presence.

8. Conversations with field officers make it clear that unless the District Commissioner, members of the DDC, and the DDO himself feels that the exercise has had some impact at the centre, has affected sectoral plans for the district, and can be seen to have an impact in the district, then it will be difficult for the DDO to conduct a successful exercise in the future. In short, Government has to demonstrate its commitment to decentralized planning by deed not words. This is crucial. The current exercise is really little more than a dry-run for the more important exercise planned to precede the preparation of the next plan, when the desired "bottom-up" input is to be fed into the national plan. New or revised district plans will have to be started by 1981 at the latest. However, for the exercise to be fruitful, the following conditions should to some extent be met:

- i. The redesign of financial information and budget flows to provide the necessary data at the district level.

- ii. The provision of sufficient socio-economic information on a district base to permit an accurate assessment of needs and against which results can be measured.
- iii. Increased discretion over resource allocation decisions at the district level, and a real impact on sectoral programmes through the DDC.
- iv. Increased staffing in the RPS and the districts.

To some extent the government has made a commitment to the fulfilment of these prerequisites in the draft national plan currently in production. Clearly there is a commitment to maintaining the present momentum. The DDCs have been given the responsibility of monitoring "all Government expenditures directed to district level and to identify lags in plan implementation by all ministries". Moreover, all district sectoral sub-committees are to be sub-committees of the DDC, and all harambee activities are to secure DDC approval. Finally, the plan attempts to do what Treasury circulars have not successfully done: that is to insist that "in order to encourage district level participation in development planning, monitoring and implementation, ministries will, when appropriate to their programmes -

- i. provide district level disaggregated information on planned and actual expenditures ...
- ii. identify, where appropriate, output targets and in particular their effects at district level on the target groups identified in the Plan ..."

(Draft Plan, Chapter 2:92).

But it is easier to write plans than reform bureaucracies and alter power relationships.

9. The advisors in the RPS have played the major role in the development of a system for decentralized district planning. The accomplishments to date, are under the circumstances, all that might be expected. The mistakes have been made and recognized; the constraints and obstacles have been determined and remedial action undertaken. But with the two assistants who have worked full-time on district planning about to leave, and with the variety of duties placed upon the three full-time

advisors the section will find it extremely difficult to assist sufficiently in the completion of the final drafts of all plans.

C. District Project Identification and Evaluation

Work on this aspect of the project has not yet begun. With the decision to prepare 40 district plans, the work of the advisors was thrown into the exercise, and the advisor whose task it was to be to develop a system for project identification and evaluation has been largely occupied with the district plans and the EEC-funded Machakos project. However, in working with the district plans and the Machakos project considerable background work has been done, and work should be able to move ahead quickly once the district plans are out of the way. Two years experience with the Rural Development Fund has also provided the advisors with the essential insights and information, and the addition of an engineer in the RPS within the near future will also expedite the development of a sound and relatively simple system.

D. Implementation and Monitoring of Rural Development Programmes

The major rural development programme for which the RPS has been responsible is the Rural Development Fund. The RDF consists of District Development Grants, begun in 1971 to provide government financial support for self-help projects in the district, and the Rural Works Programme, initiated in 1974 to provide employment through the funding of labour-intensive projects at the district level. Projects supported under both programmes are relatively small (under £3000), are locally identified, and are designed to fill the gaps in the larger ministerially identified programmes. Projects are recommended by the DDC, and forwarded to the Ministry through the PPO for approval. Funds were released to the Provincial Plans Officer who had the Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE), but the projects were implemented by the appropriate Ministry. Co-ordinator of the programme was the DDO as the executive secretary of the DDC.

By the time the first advisor and the head of the RPS arrived it was clear that the R F had aroused substantial local enthusiasm and was implementing useful projects that had been identified within the district. It was also clear that the RDF faced a variety of implementation problems which had led to an over-all spending rate of little more than 50 per cent of allocations. The Gerhart-Norbye report of January-April 1976 indentified many of the constraints and suggested a number of solutions, and a further GOK-Nordic assessment of the RDF in December 1977 underlined what by then had become obvious. By the fall of 1977, with the district planning exercise launched, the R F turned its attention to the RDF, and by the spring of 1978 was in a position to respond positively to the last evaluation. A lengthy paper prepared by the Section candidly outlined the obstacles and proposed structural, procedural, and personnel solutions. By then no new approvals were being given because the fund although under-spent was over committed by about £600,000.

The RPS study identified the problems as:

1. Poor financial control; over-allocation and under-expenditure; slow and inadequate reporting from the district to MEPCA and within the RPS itself; irregularities in the use of the funds in the field, and the lack of a field audit; and the absence of a formula for allocations.
2. Administrative-Organization Problems: delay in the approval process and implementation; in the Provincial Planning Office; and the problems inherent in the dual nature of the DDO (see below)
3. Problems of implementation; limitations of staff at the district level; disinterest or opposition on the part of implementing ministries and their district officers; and the prerequisite of the self-help component for the DDGs.

The solutions proposed to government were in most instances similar to those suggested in the evaluations, tempered by more insight into government processes and moderated by a sense of realism. They also reflected

remedies already underway within the RPS itself. Basically the proposed reforms involved an allocation formula for project approvals per district; a simplified and improved reporting system; the formation of an inspectorate in the RPS (an engineer, expatriate advisor and an accountant); increased technical staff in the field with one expatriate engineer in each province; increased staff support for the DDO; transfer of the AIE to the DDO from the PPO; implementation of an earlier proposal to reduce the role of the PPO in the approval process; provision of a percentage of total costs to the implementing ministry; and increasing the flexibility in the self-help component. The report did not endorse the proposal that over-commitment be permitted to offset under expenditure because it was prohibited by government policy, nor did it agree that final project approval should be decentralized from Nairobi to the field.

A month later, Government appointed Messrs. H.M. Mile (DPS: MFP) and P.J. Njuguna (DPS: OOP) to undertake a study in the field of the rural development programme, and the role of the DDO. Completed early in 1979, the report verified the earlier studies and proposed solutions similar to those outlined in the internal RPS analysis. The report did not believe that anything was to be gained by attempting to make the DDO an officer in MEPCA but recommended that his special relationship to MEPCA and the RPS be explicitly recognized. It also recommended that the Office of the President instruct all operating ministries to cooperate in the programme and to so instruct their district officers. The report also recommended the expanded role for the DDC outlined in the draft plan.

Meanwhile, the RPS has produced what seems like a reasonable and workable district allocation formula based on population, arable land, wage employment, and famine relief.

If the changes proposed and endorsed are successfully implemented, the constraints on the programme should be

minimized and the capacity at the local level to undertake more development activity through the RDF enhanced.

E. Training and Counterparting

Annex A of the GOK-Harvard contract states:

"The Government will insure that there is at least one qualified Kenyan counterpart to work with each advisor. Training of counterparts and of other concerned personnel of the Ministry and related organizations will be a major responsibility of each advisor and will be given equal importance with the role of providing technical advice. Training will take several forms. It will consist first, of close collaboration in those activities in which technical work is being carried out. Second, it will include formal and informal courses and seminars to be given for the staff of the division either alone or in conjunction with other divisions or ministries, and, third, appropriate foreign training.

It is the expectation that by 1980 foreign technical advisers will no longer be needed and any future relationship would be in terms of short-term expert assistance.

Following observations may be made:

1. There have always been at least three Kenyans in the Rural Planning Section, but there has been little formal one-on-one counterparting with an explicit training understanding. The Senior Advisor may be seen as counterparting the head of the section; one advisor has a part-time seconded officer working with him on one set of district plan; another has recently been loosely associated with Kenyan officers in Nairobi and in the field; the two short-term assistants have had no counterparts in Nairobi. However, it could be argued that all the District Development Officers are counterparts, and that the entire district planning exercise is a training programme. While the advisors have not rejected explicit training as one of their major responsibilities, the nature of the work, structure of the Section, and frequent staff moves have made it difficult and sometimes impossible if work is to go ahead.

2. Some excellent work has been done in the provision of organized seminars. The September 1977 week-long seminar-briefing on the District Planning exercise and its short-term and long-term relationship to national planning was regarded as essential and excellent by every District Development Officer interviewed. Certainly the outline of the programme and the documents stemming from it would lead to the same conclusion. In addition, the Section has also participated in the first regional seminar on demography and economic planning for the benefit of those involved in decentralized planning. While the Population Studies and Research Institute of the University of Nairobi has prepared the technical demographic material, the Section made a major contribution to it. The success of these two ventures indicates that a well planned and relevant series of seminars could materially enhance the capacity of members of the section and the associated provincial and district officers to implement and monitor decentralized planning and rural development activity.

3. Annex B of the GOK-Harvard contract indicates a budget for eight training years, whether in Kenya or abroad, and a small sum for local training. To date two officers have been sent to North America for graduate training one of whom has returned. Two others will be selected over the next two years. However, given the enormous staffing needs of the Section (and in the field as time passes and officers get moved) this training component alone will not in any way provide the manpower with advanced training necessary to enable the Section to do without expatriate support by December 1980.

E. Miscellaneous Objectives.

There is no doubt from the testimony of Kenyan officials, from the body of documentation read, and from the daily activity seen on the ground that the three full-time advisers have provided timely and high quality advisory and operational services to the Ministry. Two members of the

project have made significant contribution to the Fourth National Plan in a variety of chapters and have played an important role in helping with the production of the Plan. A third has committed much of his time helping to implement the Machakos district programme and working on plans for other comparable district or regional integrated plans. All have provided economic and operational advice to the head of the section and to the Permanent Secretary. Each has worked diligently to attempt to open the operating ministries in Nairobi to the need for sharing of data, provision of disaggregated data, and to the mutual and national benefits to be gained by the co-ordination of planning and operational activity.

III CONSTRAINTS

While the foregoing comments on the achievement of project objectives were intended to be laudatory, there is no doubt that major constraints have had and will continue to have a negative effect on the speed with which project objectives can be achieved, on the impact of decentralized planning and, if not lessened or removed, on the long-term success of the Rural Planning Section and the co-ordination of rural development activity and the implementation of an iterative district-national planning policy. Some of these have already been mentioned explicitly or have been implied. Not all can be discussed in an evaluation of the project, but the most important (not in order of magnitude) would seem to be: time constraints on the three advisors; inadequate staffing and counterparting by the Government; the centralized structure of the Government of Kenya (and the inevitable attitudes of those running the operating ministries) which hinders a rapid movement to decentralization; the relative newness of the District Development Committees and their lack of experience in handling an increasing scope of work, and the ambiguous position of the District Development Officer; the lack of a tradition of the wananchi (like wananchi everywhere) in participating in local planning activities, and the lack of a structure in Kenya if they wished to do so.

To take each in turn.

1. Excluding the short-term assistants, a total of six man years has been provided by the advisors and six are left. Since experience indicates that advisors seldom settle in within three months and spend the last three preparing to depart there really has been little time spent on the multitude of tasks at hand, and there is precious little time left. As indicated above, necessary pre-occupation with district planning deferred work toward other project objectives; yet the transfer of attention in time to other activities has slowed the district planning exercise to the point where some District Development Officers have become persuaded that their energy, if not their commitment, is not shared in Nairobi. The two short-term assistants have maintained the momentum in some districts, but their departure will leave a gap not easily filled given the demands on the time of advisors.
2. The lack of counterparts and/or the nature and level of the work has forced the advisors to assume operational as well as advisory roles. For example, as far as can be determined, the advisors did not advise government on the data needs, structure, flow and organization of the district plans, but in fact wrote the manual themselves, although in close collaboration with the Kenyans in the RPS. Even when counterparts are available, it is unquestionably more efficient to do the work directly (as advisors on most projects will in candour reveal), but it does little to build institutions and develop human resources. Some fault may lie with the advisors here, but it is of far less importance than the sheer shortage of manpower in place for an extended period of time.
2. There is no need to reiterate here the traditional centralization of the operations of the Government of Kenya, for the project itself was an attempt to offset that centralization in the expectation (rightly or wrongly)

that centralization was one of the obstacles in the way of a rural development programme that would both increase and redistribute wealth more equitably. As expected, whatever the rhetoric of decentralized planning, the operating ministries, on the whole, have found it difficult, or (in some cases) have seemingly been unwilling to expend the time and energy necessary to provide disaggregated data on current or planned expenditures; to instruct or compel their district officers to assist wholeheartedly in the work of the District Development Committees, and to implement approved rural development projects; and generally to welcome the co-ordination of rural development activities within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs. The blame may be laid partly on the historical structure of Government operations and the vertical sectoral organization in particular, but it may also be laid partly at the door of officers who clearly do not wish to see their ultimate authority and power weakened. Some ministries have proved far worse in Nairobi and the field than others, and there are some welcome signs that the work of the section and the advisors in the section is beginning to bear fruit. Some ministries are simply being worn down, while others come to realize the reciprocal benefits that can be secured through co-operation.

In this connection it is impossible to ignore the conviction at USAID that the rural planning project and the Technical Assistance Pool in the Ministry of Agriculture: are really two aspects of a project designed to secure a common end. Not only is that specific in the project document and more or less so in the USAID-GOK agreement, but it is stated in the Harvard-GOK contract for the Rural Planning Project (though not in the contract for the Agriculture project). As it states:

"The effective implementation of the project requires that the Ministry of Finance and Planning and its Rural Development Division ensure that the agricultural development activities are in harmony with the Government's

overall rural development priorities and strategies. It is incumbent that Harvard, to the maximum extent possible, strive to establish and maintain a co-ordinated complementary relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture's Development Planning Division and MOFP/RPD such that Harvard's work in the Ministry of Agriculture small farmer oriented rural development projects could readily draw on the rural systems developed in the MOFP/RPD."

As far as can be determined there is no conflict between the objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture's rural development policies and the objectives of the Rural Planning Section which is not production but planning and co-ordination oriented. Nevertheless, there are problems. Agriculture has been one of the ministries which has found it difficult to provide the data necessary for the successful work of the RPS, and on occasion would appear to have been something less than totally co-operative whether through time and staff constraints or through legitimate differences of opinion over priorities or policies. By their very nature the two projects are responsible to different units of the government of Kenya. The government of Kenya may work to ensure compatibility of objectives and complementarity of means; two groups of expatriate advisors cannot. The gap may be bridged, but the bridge will not provide access to a freeway.

4. The relative lack of experience of the District Development Committees (revitalized in 1972) need not be reiterated, particularly the lack of plan and planning consciousness. Nor do the problems associated with the Office of the District Development Officer upon whose shoulders effectively falls the responsibility for the day to day activities of the DDC, the preparation of district plans, and ultimately the supervision of and monitoring of district development activity. The Ndogwa Commission in 1971 (which effectively led to the translation of the rhetoric of decentralized planning into a commitment to a vague concept) recommended the creation of a District Development Officer within the district administration and a District

Planning Officer responsible to the Ministry of Planning. However, when the office of the DDO was created in 1974 (and the DPO rejected) it was, after long debate, decided to establish the DDO within the office of the President, and therefore while he was selected by the Ministry he was seconded to the Office of the President and placed under the District Commissioner.

The first officers were hardly in post when it became clear that their dual position was a constraint on development and planning activities. Under the jurisdiction of the District Commissioner, the DDO was also held to be responsible for the development and planning activities of the Ministry. Yet while support (in terms of staff, transport, time and moral) from the District administration was essential, the DDO often found that it was either lukewarm or non-existent. Appeals and circulars from Nairobi reiterating the dual nature of the DDOs duties, if not his responsibility, had little effect in the field, and solutions became critical as the RPS tried to cope with the necessities of district planning and the improvement in the performance of the Rural Development Fund.

There was little difficulty in identifying the problems, as has been pointed out earlier. The obvious solution - at least to an outsider - seemed to be to place the DDO completely under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs. But to officers seasoned to the realities of power in Kenya it was clear that the DDO could only be effective at the local level if the power he exercised reflected not the majesty of a planning ministry in Nairobi but the reality of the arm of the District Commissioner.

This reality underlay the recommendations of the report by Messrs. Mule and Njuguna. Their findings underlined the statement of problems prepared in the RPS, and their solutions if implemented in the field promise to go a long way to providing a remedy. While recommending no change in the secondment of the DDO, they

recommended that "the special relationship; of the DDO to MEPCA be specifically noted" and that the Office of the President reaffirm its commitment to providing the DDO with the necessary support services and clearly restate that commitment to the Provincial and District Commissioners. This is an absolute minimum and if not effective, other measures must be undertaken to ensure the effectiveness of the DDO in practice.

As internal documents had suggested, the Mulo/Njuguna report also foresaw the need for increased training for the DDOs. The Report rejected, or at least did not envision, a special scheme of service for the DDOs, but recommended that the Office of the President and MEPCA attempt to arrange in-service courses, as well as overseas training for some.

5. The GOK-Harvard agreement speaks of decentralized planning "including an increased degree of local participation," while the USAID-GOK agreement calls for the implementation for a system of "decentralized, participatory rural planning." In neither document is "participation" or "participatory" spelled out, and it is not clear exactly what was meant. It is likely that the authors were reflecting the current popularity of the word participation - whether "local" or "grass roots" - in the literature of decentralized planning, and reflecting the widespread (and presumably reasonable) assumption that it is desirable and beneficial to secure inputs in the planning process from the intended beneficiaries.

At the present moment in the Kenyan system, local inputs come through the DDCs. While there is, therefore a large degree of local input reflecting knowledge of local conditions and needs it would, as the Senior Advisor stated, be more appropriate to call the current participatory process "bureaucratic" rather than "popular".

However, rhetoric aside, this evolving situation would not seem to betray the expectations of USAID. As the USAID Project Team admitted:- "Obviously, a total realization of the development from below approach is not achievable in the relatively short time frame of this project. Evolution of the theory of participatory approach to development is relatively recent, and knowledge about and experience with the approach are limited. Moreover, to shift any bureaucracy toward such a fundamental and complex policy change is a massive job requiring personnel, training and retraining, and time for experimentation Therefore, the project should be viewed only as a cautious beginning aimed at developing an adjunct to the current GOK decentralized planning system which over time will enhance grass-roots participation in all aspects of rural development and prove the value of this approach." A wise admission of short-term project possibilities.

IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A great deal of progress has been made in recent years in working towards the long-term and general goal of improving rural development programmes with a greater degree - or the promise of a greater degree of district or local participation. The work of the Rural Planning Section (and within it the advisors) has made important contributions to that progress, and much will depend upon it in the future. But as indicated repeatedly above, the constraints upon its activities are factors over which it alone - or the Ministry - has little control. The achievement of the general objective is only possible within the context of the Government of Kenya as a whole and must involve all its branches: The Office of the President, the operating ministries, provincial and district administrators, field officers, local governments and the private and voluntary sectors.

This in turn means that there must be a clear and well understood commitment to the policy and the means to implement it at cabinet level. Presumably the statements in the new Plan indicate that commitment, but without appropriate follow-up, the reality in the field may be analogous to sand castles fighting the incoming tide.

1. The Mile/Njuguna report recommends that an annual meeting be held of Permanent Secretaries of appropriate ministries, chaired by MERCA, to review the performance of the RDF and to discuss other issues requiring interministerial consideration. It is recommended that this high-level committee expand its concerns to cover all issues raised by the decentralization of planning for rural development. The constraints are not removable by the RPS or MERCA alone.

2. Even if the external constraints are removed, however, the Rural Planning Section will only be able to fulfill its mission if it is well organized, has a status in the system appropriate to its functions, is led by a cadre of able and dynamic officers, and is adequately staffed and supported. It is recommended that the Section be upgraded, organized along the lines of the internal report, and be provided with adequate talented staff as soon as circumstances permit. (1)

3. Progress on the district planning exercise, as a major step towards decentralized planning, is satisfactory. But much remains to be done. Few of the Plans are nearing completion, and almost no final chapters have been written. While the three full-time advisors are now returning to that exercise there ^{is} no doubt that they will be diverted to other purposes, or should move on to other activities. It is recommended, therefore, that while each of the advisors continues to work with the districts placed under his charge, additional support be sought to oversee the conclusion of the district plans. It is recommended that the Senior Advisor examine the budget for full-time advisors and short term consultants and determine if funds are available.

4. The current district planning exercise has had limited impact on the national plan. It is anticipated in the Ministry, however, that there will be a real iteration between district

(1) See Appendix C for progress since the drafting of this report.

plans and the national plan in the 1984-89 exercise. However, this exercise, even if implemented, would not make maximum use of the work currently underway. It is recommended, therefore, that the section should, once the plans are completed, undertake an analysis of the district plans in the context of the national plan. Such an analysis could lead to the preparation of revised guidelines, data needs, etc. for the next planning exercise. More importantly, the analysis could also be a critique of the National Plan in its relationship to, or fulfillment of, the development needs as tentatively expressed at the district level. In both instances an important step forward would have been made towards making decentralized planning effective.

5. But additional support will not resolve all the problems facing the advisors. It is recommended that the Senior Advisor and the Government themselves engage in a real planning exercise and in the light of constraints of manpower and time establish their priorities for the period ending December 31, 1980. This agreed plan will then constitute the control mechanism to prevent useful but not high priority diversions, and will ensure that certain high priority goals are achieved. This Plan could then constitute the forward work Programme - and perhaps be accepted as a retrospective report on activities - that the contractor is supposed to submit to Government (and to be examinable by AID). No such report - forward or backward - has been submitted for any period since that ending December 31, 1977.

Among the matters considered for inclusion as high priority would be:

- i. Completion and analysis of the district plans.
- ii. ways of increasing genuine non-bureaucratic participation in planning.
- iii. Preparation of a simplified system for the identification, evaluation, and implementation of local projects.
- iv. Development of a system for the effective flow of information on a continuing basis between centre and district (currently under way).

v. Participating in the integrated rural development programmes as coordinating and monitoring agency.

vi. Organization, training and staffing of the Rural Planning Section, including a more specific and organized counterpart and in-service training programme.

vii. Development of a system for monitoring through the DDC the sectoral activities at the district level, as contemplated in the draft Plan.

viii. Consultation with the operating ministries concerning the most effective way of disaggregating sectoral activities - development and recurrent - at the district level.

ix. Development of a system for the identification and capture of information that can only be secured at the district level for planning and rural development programmes.

6. The forward movement mentioned in 4 above is critical. While some Ministries are positively interested in seeing the implementation of policies leading to the decentralization of planning within reasonable limits, others are indifferent and in some cases openly sceptical or opposed. The indifference and opposition at the center has created a certain amount of cynicism in the field. The initial indication that the district plans would have an impact on the national plan has been revealed to be an illusion; the slow feedback from the centre (and even the provinces) has persuaded some DDOs that only lip-service is being paid to decentralized planning, and any sign that the Plans, once finished, lay unread and unused (like the earlier version) would, as some have stated categorically, make it very difficult to secure any enthusiasm for another district planning exercise. It is recommended that the DDOs also be involved in the proposed analysis and synthesis, the exercise providing another opportunity for in-service training.

It is further recommended that the role of the DDCs and DDOs be expanded gradually to increase their responsibilities for supervision of all development activities in the District; that the necessary accompanying changes in preparing and presenting financial and budget information, including that needed to produce disaggregated figures at the District level,

be implemented as soon as possible; and that the DDOs and DDCs analyze and report on a regular basis to MEPCA on the progress made in the implementation of the district development plans, and the nature and cause of the problems experienced.

7. The morale and the professional ability (and reputation) of the DDO is essential to the successful implementation of any decentralized planning policy. The Government may well choose to reject a scheme of service for the DDOs, but it is recommended that there should be something approaching it in terms of career opportunities, with vertical and horizontal mobility, access to advanced training, and a sense of professional identity.

8. In the short-term, the professional competence of the DDO is essential to the satisfactory implementation of district planning and the local identification and implementation of rural development projects. It is recommended that the proposal in the Mile/Njuguna Report be immediately followed up, and the Rural Planning Section devise an appropriate and rigorous series of seminars and conferences to increase the capacity of the DDs, some of whom have had neither the training nor the experience for the work they are being asked to undertake.

9. The addition of a District Planning Officer to the staff of the overall planning exercise would be invaluable. But it would be illusory to think that such officers could be found, trained and put in place given the manpower constraints repeatedly referred to in this (and every other similar) evaluation.

10. The severe manpower constraints encountered once again, however, should underline the need for Government and donors to consider seriously major training programmes to increase the supply of junior planning officers in the public service, and ultimately provide the cadre of leadership the development planning process in Kenya will demand once the goal of Kenyanization is approached and without which it will only be reached in a future too distant to be contemplated with equanimity.

Appendix A**Conduct of the Evaluation:**

Work began on January 16 and was completed on March 6 when the final report was submitted. After an initial briefing by the Senior Advisor I spent a number of days familiarizing myself with the work of the Section by examining all the documentation available on the district planning exercise, the Rural Development Fund, the organization of the Section, and other issues. Over the next few weeks I interviewed all five advisors (some on several occasions and at great length), Kenyan officers attached to the Section, sectoral officers in MEPCA, three members of the Technical Assistance Pool in the Ministry of Agriculture, two Provincial Planning Officers, two Rural Planning Advisers, nine District Development Officers, the appropriate officers in USAID, and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs.

Bibliography:

All relevant files, memoranda, circulars, study papers and correspondence in the Rural Planning Section.

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Ten randomly selected draft district plans.

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Gerhart, John, and Norbye, Ole D.K., Rural Works Programme for Kenya, 1976

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TERMS OF REFERENCE
MID-TERM REVIEW
RURAL PLANNING PROJECT
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

There are two agreements that relate to the operation of the project. Each has a requirement for a mid-term review of project activities. The agreement between the Government of Kenya and USAID, dated June 30, 1976, states in section 2.8(c) that "during the third year of the Project the Parties will jointly conduct an evaluation of the RPU technical assistance portion of this Project".

The agreement between the Government of Kenya and the President and Fellows of Harvard College, dated 1 April 1976, says in section 1.3(a) that "services will continue through 31st December, 1980, subject to a satisfactory review of progress at the end of two years on terms mutually agreed upon by the Government and Harvard".

The interested parties agree that a single review is more desirable than the separate reviews anticipated in the agreements. They have therefore agreed that only one review will be conducted, and that its terms of reference shall be satisfactory to all three parties.

PROJECT PURPOSES

The general purpose of the project as set forth in the GOK/HIID document are/^{to} assist the Government to expand the scope and effectiveness of its rural development plans and programmes with emphasis on achieving self sustained increases in rural incomes and employment, and a more equitable income distribution. More specifically, the project is to assist the Government in building up its capacity for:

1. Decentralized and participatory planning.
2. Reviewing evaluating and coordinating decentralized plans.
3. Assessing information needs for effective local planning and instituting systems for the collection and use of this information.

4. Administering and implementing certain rural development programmes, including the Rural Development Fund.
5. Developing and implementing guidelines for project identification and evaluation.
6. Analyzing training needs and identifying appropriate programmes.

The GOK/AID document states that: The purpose of this project is to plan and implement a system of decentralized, participatory rural planning units supportive of the Ministry of Agriculture's planning and implementation efforts. More specifically, the advisors of the project will:

1. Provide guidance and advice on, and participate in preparation of, the next five-year Kenya Development Plan.
2. Provide economic advice to the head of the Rural Planning Unit.
3. Analyze and make recommendations with regard to current training needs and available programs for officials engaged in district development and decentralized planning.
4. Analyze and make recommendations with regard to improvements in the system for gathering and transmitting information for rural planning and implementation.
5. Develop guidelines for project selection and preparation at the District level.
6. Develop detailed project inventory matrices showing how local development activities and those of central ministries are integrated at the District level.

PURPOSES OF REVIEW

Several specific purposes are set out below. However, the reviewer is encouraged to interpret his scope of work broadly, and to conduct his examination in a manner that will provide guidance and suggestions to the Government, USAID, and Harvard on ways in which the process of decentralized planning . . . can be improved.

The review shall include the following:

1. Evaluation of the degree to which the project purposes are being achieved. This evaluation shall include the short term aspect of achieving immediate objectives and the longer term aspect of contributing to the process of institutional and procedural change.
2. Identifying, appraising, and offering suggestions in regard to problems and constraints encountered by the project. These shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. The adequacy and effectiveness of counterpart staffing.
 - b. Levels of support and cooperation within MEPCA and other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, and with the field staff at Provincial and district levels.
 - c. Difficulties arising from the operational nature of many of the project's purposes. On the positive side, this permits an increased opportunity of influencing organizational and institutional processes and changes. On the negative side, it carries the risk of absorbing project energies in excessive detail, and the reduction of advisers to operating officers.
 - d. The diversion of project energies to activities that are not directly related to specific project purposes.
3. Making suggestions for changes in the functioning of the project, including:
 - a. Desirable alterations in the project purposes or shifts in emphasis between purposes.
 - b. Inclusion of new activities. As a case in point, the development of arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) has become an important aspect of decentralized planning since the creation of the project and the determination of its objectives. Substantial portions of project time and effort are now being directed to ASAL planning.

- c. Indicated needs for changes in staffing or in budget.
- d. Consideration of the appropriate time period for the achievement of project goals.
- d. Recommendations to assure that the district development plans are implemented; or alternatively, identification and removal of implementation constraints that might otherwise cause the rural planning process to fail.

PROCEDURES

The review shall be conducted by Professor John Saywell, of York University, Toronto Canada.

Mr. Saywell shall have wide access to persons familiar with the operation of the project. He will interview project personnel, staff members of the Rural Planning Section, Sectoral and other officers within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs, USAID staff, and Government field staff, including district Development Officers, Provincial Planning Officers, and Provincial Planning Assistants.

He will also have access to background and operating papers produced by project members, Rural Planning Section staff, and field officers, including district planning documents, Rural Development Fund analyses, and papers relating to special area development needs.

Professor Saywell will devote up to twenty eight working days to the review, including preparation of his written report and the discussion of the report with the interested parties. The review will be conducted between 20 January and 5 March 1979. Payment of the expenses of the review will be made from the consultant portion of the project budget.

Approved:

Government of Kenya, by (H.M. Mule)
Title
Permanent Secretary, MEPCA

USAID, by (R. Muscat)
Title
Assistant Director

Harvard Institute for
International
Development, by (R.M. Hook)
Title
(Senior Adviser)

Dated: 23 February, 1979

Appendix C

ORGANIZATIONAL AND STAFFING
CHANGES SINCE THE SAYWELL REPORT

A number of important changes have taken place in connection with the Rural Planning Section since the date of Professor Saywell's Mid-term Evaluation. Taken together, these changes demonstrate the strength of the Government's Commitment to the processes of rural development and decentralized planning. The changes are:

1. In July, 1979, Mr. J.H.O. Kidenda, serving as Head of the Section, was promoted from Principal Economist to Deputy Chief Economist.
2. In August, 1979, the status of the Rural Planning Section was advanced when it became the Rural Planning Division.
3. There has been a substantial increase in staff since the date of Professor Saywell's report, as shown below:

Staffing

As of 5 March 1979

Principal Economist
Three Planning Officers
One Planning Office on study leave
Chief Accountant
Three advisors

And in the Rural Services
Coord. and Training Unit:

Two officers
One adviser

As of 15 August, 1979

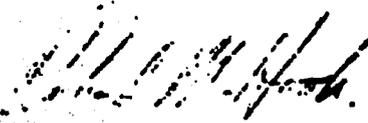
Deputy Chief Economist
Six Planning Officers
One Planning Officer on study leave
Chief Accountant
One Assistant Secretary
Three Officers of Planning Officer grade on temporary assignment to work with district plans

Three Advisors

And in the Rural Services Coord. and Training Unit

Three Officers

Permanent Kenyan staff has increased from eight to thirteen, assist by three offices on temporary duty. It is anticipated that at least one of the three will be added to the permanent establishment.



RICHARD M. HOOK
SENIOR ADVISOR.

15 August, 1979