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SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL
SERVICES IN COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
REGION. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING NEEDS AND PLANS FOR
IMPROVEMENT.

In the following is given summaries of statistical organization and present needs and future plans, as indicated in the questionnaire sent by the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean to countries of the region in May 1963.

CYPRUS

1. General Statistical Services

The Department of Statistics and Research at the Ministry of Finance is the central statistical agency. Its activities in vital and health statistics consist of collection, compilation and publication of data.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

There is a statistical clerk in the Medical Department of the Ministry of Health, who is responsible for the processing of health statistics. This clerk has gained experience through long service. There is no health statistical service at the provincial, regional or local levels nor in institutions and establishments.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

For the last few years the collection of vital and health statistical returns was not done accurately. This is particularly noticeable in the case of births and deaths, a good number of which are not reported.

It would be desirable that the Clerk in the Medical Department obtains special training abroad.

There are no plans for improvement in the immediate future. It is intended, however, to arrange for a fellowship, possibly under the aegis of the World Health Organization, to train one or two suitable persons in statistical work.

There are no serious difficulties in carrying out these plans.

The most effective assistance from WHO for the development of health statistics would be the awarding of one or two fellowships for the purpose of special training in this field.

ETHIOPIA

1. General Statistical Services

The Central Statistics Office publishes data received from the various Ministries.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

A Statistical Office exists in the Ministry of Public Health. This Office is the only processing agency in health statistics and each health establishment is held responsible for the timely and regular submission of health statistics to the Ministry of Public Health.

The General Advisory Board of Health is the advisory body on vital and health statistics in the country.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

There is a great lack of personnel specifically trained in health statistics.

The best way to improve the situation is to train people thoroughly so that they may be fit to work in the various centres of statistical services in the Empire.

The Chief of the Medical Statistics Office, who holds B.S. Degree in Mathematics, may be further trained in vital and health statistics.

The expected difficulties for development of statistics are connected with the sufficient number and type of health statistical personnel and equipment.

The most effective assistance from WHO for the development of health statistics in Ethiopia would be in:

1. Training of personnel,
2. Provision of equipment required for standard health statistical service.

IRAN

1. General Statistical Services

The Department General of Public Statistics is the central statistical agency. It is responsible for vital statistics, while health statistics are processed and published in the Health Statistics Department of the Ministry of Health.

2. Organization of Health Statistics Services

a. National health statistics

The Department of Health Statistics and Survey Office of the Ministry of Health are responsible for national health statistics. Under the Chief of the office and his assistant are the following sections:

- Statistical projects
- Training and education
- Provincial statistics
- Publications
- International statistics
- Reports
- Graphs
- Vital statistics
- Communicable diseases

The following equipment is available:

- 3 electric calculating machines
- 4 hand calculating machines
- 3 slide-rules

b. Health statistics at the provincial, regional and local levels

The smallest reporting unit is the local health unit and reporting is channelled from the health units to provincial centres and Headquarters.

Health institutions do not have special personnel for keeping records and preparing reports.

An advisory or coordinative body in vital and health statistics does not exist.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

1. The present organization needs more cooperation between Vital Statistics and the Registration Department. Lack of budget, qualified personnel and mechanical equipment are other main causes of deficiencies in the organization of the Health Statistics Department.

2. There is need for more funds, more trained personnel and more mechanical equipment.

3. There is need also for more interest of responsible persons for the improvement of cooperation between individuals and improvement of the organization of vital and health statistics.

4. According to a project suggested to "Plan Organization" the provincial level of health statistics will be improved and many health surveys will be carried out in different parts of the country in order to discover the health problems in Iran.

5. The expected difficulties in carrying out the above mentioned plans are delays in obtaining approval of the project.

6. The most effective assistance from WHO for the development of health statistics in the country would be in the form of supply of statistical machines to the Department of Statistics.

IRAQ

1. General Statistical Services

General statistics in Iraq are under the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

a. National health statistics

The Ministry of Health is the responsible government department for health statistics.

i The Director of Vital and Health Statistics under the Minister of Health is in charge of health statistics in all health departments in Iraq. The Department of Vital and Health Statistics consists, in addition to the Director, of a supervisor and five clerks.

ii Three calculating machines are available.

Hospitals, dispensaries, polyclinics, childhood and welfare centres and all health institutions have special personnel for keeping records (uniformly designed for each type) and preparing reports (uniform for the whole country).

No advisory or coordinative body on vital and health statistics exists in the country.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

Deficiencies at present are lack of machines and trained staff.

Difficulties are also in the cooperation with the Ministry of Health in registering vital events. Health staff throughout the country need more training for statistical work to collect accurate data and to file them in the Ministry.

The situation would be improved considerably by:

a. Training more personnel for statistical work.

b. Supervision by the Chief Medical Officers of all statistical staff in his districts.

c. Cooperation between the Health Education Department and the Vital and Health Statistics Department in the Ministry of Health in order to promote understanding of the importance of registration of vital events.

Plans for improvement comprise supply of statistical machines and training of personnel.

THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

1. General Statistical Services

The Department of Statistics is the central statistical agency of the country. Data collected in the Ministry of Health are processed at this Department.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

a. National health statistics

There is a Vital Statistics Section in the Ministry of Health, consisting of the Head of the Section and seven statistical clerk, trained at ISEC, Beirut.

Mechanical equipment consists of two card index cabinets, one duplicator and three calculating machines.

b. Trained statistical clerks are posted in five District Health Centres to keep records and prepare reports.

c. A "National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics" acts as an advisory or coordinative body on vital and health statistics in the country. Its function is to consider the ways to collect, standardize and publish vital and health statistics data and to make suggestions for improving them.

2. Existing needs and plans for the future

Vital statistics are still handicapped in remote rural areas and among unsettled tribes where correct information, especially as to causes of death, are far below the standard.

The way to improve the Vital Statistics Section is to:

- a. Increase number of trained clerks.
- b. Post trained clerks in all districts and sub-districts.
- c. Purchase mechanical equipment.

The most effective assistance from WHO for the development of health statistics in Jordan would be:

- a. Supply of mechanical equipment.

b. Increase of number of fellowships for clerks to be trained in vital and health statistics.

c. A consultant in vital and health statistics for a period not less than six months, in order to organize and review the present existing health forms and any other matters relating to vital and health statistics.

KUWAIT

1. General Statistical Services

The Bureau of Statistics is the central statistical agency, in charge of collection, tabulation, classification and analysis of statistics.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

The use of statistical data collected is mainly for future planning and study of various problems.

Experienced personnel is needed in the Statistical Office. For improvement of statistical work in the Ministry of Health there is need to send an employee for specialisation in the field of statistics.

LEBANON

1. General Statistical Services

There is a Central Statistical Office in the Ministry of Interior.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

The Ministry of Public Health has a Vital and Health Statistics Department, which publishes an "Annual Report on Vital and Health Statistics".

Present personnel consist of eight persons, including the Head of the Department; in addition, there is one vacant post.

A National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics has been established. This Committee has made proposals for improvement of vital and health statistical services in Lebanon.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

The deficiencies of the present organization of vital and health statistics are:

- a. Lack of continuity in the supply of available statistical data by the departments concerned and incompleteness of data.
- b. Lack of collaboration on the part of practising physicians and private health institutions in notifying diseases and causes of deaths, and in maintaining individual record-cards.
- c. Lack of technical statistical personnel in the Ministry of Public Health.
- d. The Department is also in need of automatic data processing equipment.

LIBYA

1. General Statistical Services

The name of the central statistical agency is the Central Statistics Office in the Ministry of National Economy.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

There is a Health Statistics Section in the Ministry of Public Health.

The personnel in the Health Statistics Section consist of eight staff members of which six have had secondary school education with six months of professional training, one with secondary school education and one with primary school education, the last two having had no professional training.

No advisory or coordinative body on vital and health statistics exists in the country.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

For development of health statistics a fully qualified health statistician and other personnel trained in statistics are needed.

Plans are underway to improve the present situation and the most effective assistance from WHO would be to award fellowships and to assign an expert in statistics for a period of two years.

PAKISTAN

1. General Statistical Services

The Central Statistical Office, Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan, is the central statistical office.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

The Ministry of Health is the responsible governmental department.

a. In the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare (Health Division), there is a Bio-Statistics Section with the following personnel:

- i One Deputy Assistant Director-General in charge of the section.
- ii Two statistical officers.
- iii Two investigators.
- iv Two statistical assistants
- v Four statistics computers.

In addition to the above staff, some clerical and ministerial staff is also working in the Bio-Statistics Section.

The Chief of the Section has a medical degree with post-graduate studies in health statistics. The Statistical officers and investigators have university degrees in mathematics or economics with specialization in statistics. The statistical assistants have been educated at ISEC, Beirut. The statistical computers have at least high school training.

b. In West Pakistan there is a Statistical Section in the Ministry of Health in Lahore, with qualified statistical personnel at the provincial and regional levels. The technical staff working in the Statistical Office is as follows:

- i One Section Officer (Statistics) in charge of the Section.
- ii Six statistical officers.
- iii Three statisticians for family planning work.
- iv Thirteen statistical assistants.

In addition to the above staff, some clerical and ministerial staff is also working in the Statistical Section.

The Section Officer has university degree in mathematics and post-graduate diploma in statistics. The statistical officers and the statisticians for family planning work all have university degree in statistics which holds true also for the majority of statistical assistants.

c. In East Pakistan, there is no organized Health Statistical Unit having qualified personnel at present. A small section comprising ministerial and clerical staff is however functioning.

d. Available mechanical equipment in the Ministry of Health consists of:

- i Two electric calculators.
- ii One hand-operated calculator.
- iii Two electric adding listing machines.

The following mechanical equipment was expected by end of July 1963:

- i One IBM sorter counter.
- ii Two IBM punchers.
- iii One IBM verifier.

e. No publications have been issued during the last three years.

A National Statistical Council has recently been established in the country; under this Council a special committee on vital and health statistics has been set up.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

The most immediate need for the present is a proper flow of statistical information from the primary reporting agencies to the District Health Officers. At the same time, steps should be taken to improve the registration system to minimize chances of under-registration. The system of registration of vital events has recently undergone a change. Under the Basic Democracies Order, 1959, the procedure has been made uniform throughout the country. This change has been brought about with a view to improve the existing conditions and to remove the difficulties of the old system. The Basic Democracies are taking the registration work gradually and the situation may improve in the near

future. The results of this change-over to the new system will, however, be known after the system has worked for some years.

The District Health Offices are the main coordinating agencies for all types of vital and health statistical information. In these Offices no special staff is employed to look after the statistical work and to obtain information regularly and punctually from the field staff and the reporting agencies. There is a need for at least one trained statistician in each district health office for the statistical work. This will go a long way to improve the present situation.

The plans for improvement in the immediate future are:

a. In order to improve vital and health statistics in the country, a Panel on Vital and Health Statistics within the framework of the National Statistical Council is being established. It is proposed to include the representatives of all the agencies (officials and non-officials) concerned with the registration and maintenance of vital and health records. The objective of the Panel would be to devise ways and means to improve the present situation.

b. The WHO Intermediate List of 150 Causes is being introduced for tabulation of morbidity and mortality statistics of hospitals and dispensaries. It has actually been introduced as a pilot project in three of the hospitals in the country.

The most effective assistance from WHO would be fellowships for training in vital and health statistics and supply of equipment, namely:

- a. Mechanical tabulation equipment.
- b. Micro-filming equipment.
- c. Photostatic equipment.

SAUDI ARABIA

1. General Statistical Services

The central statistical agency is the General Statistical Department under the Ministry of Finance.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

A Vital and Health Statistics Department has been established in the Ministry of Public Health.

This department is staffed by a chief of the department, qualified in statistics, two statistical clerks with some practical experience and one typist.

There is one calculating machine and three typerwriters in the department.

In the ten districts of the country one person trained at ISEC, Beirut, five locally trained and four untrained but with practical experience are at present employed. Three of the persons work only part-time in statistics.

No advisory or coordinative body on vital and health statistics exists in the country.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

a. The needs, at all levels, can be summarized in two items: the technical staff and health education of the public.

The difficulties met can also be summarized, at all levels, in the following points:

- i Recruiting foreign staff.
- ii Recruiting national staff.
- iii Training national staff.
- iv The trainees taking up posts outside statistics after completing training.
- v Public behaviour towards collection of vital and health statistitcal data.
- vi Primitive organization as yet of general statistics at the national level.

b. Ways to improve the situation

The ways to improve the situation should be internally planned on national basis. They can be summarized in the following points:

- i A post for a statistician should be created in the budget of every health unit from where statistical data is needed.
- ii Previously trained personnel should be transferred to these posts after being refreshed at a special short course.

iii Periodic training courses should be established for training of more personnel to fill the vacant units.

iv Statistical records should be studied and re-designed.

v The statistical organization at the district level should be strengthened to enable it to cope with the job.

vi The statistical department in the Ministry should be strengthened and well staffed with technical personnel.

vii An intensive public health education programme should be skillfully planned to overcome resistance from the public.

c. Plans for improvement in immediate future

Plans for immediate improvement, though already existing, are not being accomplished seriously and heartily. They are:

i Recruiting foreign technical experts, until self-sufficiency in national personnel is achieved.

ii Continuing fellowships for training abroad. The trainees should be carefully selected from promising persons actually working in the statistical field.

iii Continuing and intensifying the local training courses to graduate national statistical staff.

iv The budget should include sufficient provisions for necessary staff and equipment.

d. The most effective assistance from WHO for the development of health statistics in the country would be:

i A short-term consultant from WHO to advise the Government on planning the reorganization and development of vital and health statistics.

ii Agreement to put the recommendations of this expert into action.

iii Fellowships needed for the programme.

iv Assistance in recruiting necessary statistical experts from abroad and in supplying the necessary statistical equipment.

v It is suggested that efforts should be made to maintain uniformity as much as possible, in the forms, registers and records in all countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, so that the statistical figures of the various countries could be compared as far as possible.

SOMALIA

1. General Statistical Services

The Servizio di Statistica is the central statistical agency. It is fully responsible for the issue of forms to hospitals, etc., the returns of forms, and processing and publication of data.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

At present there is no Statistical Section in the Ministry of Health; all statistical work is carried out by the Servizio di Statistica.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

The plans for the immediate future are incorporated in the Five-Year Plan for statistical development.

The expected difficulties in carrying out these plans are lack of expert training facilities.

The most effective assistance from WHO would be the provision of one or more general statisticians, experienced in field work, for use as regional statisticians responsible for multi-purpose surveys, collection of hospital and other data, etc., until trained Somalis return to the country.

Assistance in the form of supply of landrovers, statistical office equipment, etc., would also be most effective.

SUDAN

1. General Statistical Services

The Department of Statistics is the name of the central statistical agency.

Activities in vital and health statistics consist of registration of births and deaths, responsibility of which lies with the Department of Statistics, while health statistics is the responsibility of the Statistical Office of the Ministry of Health.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

The Statistical Office in the Ministry of Health is in charge of national health statistics.

This Statistical Office collects information from all over the country and prepares the annual report. In some of the province hospitals statistical clerks are posted, while in the rest of the country, the medical and public health staff collects the necessary information and prepares the data that should be sent to the Ministry of Health.

Personnel consists of seven statistical clerks all of whom have been trained in Beirut.

The equipment of the office consists of six small calculating machines.

The office prepares the "Ministry of Health Annual Report"; 1959/1960 is the latest publication issued. Subsequent ones are under preparation.

3. Existing needs and plans for the future

a. There is a shortage of qualified statistical personnel at all levels.

b. The Ministry of Health has the intention of forming a National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics and creating a health statistics division in the Ministry of Health Headquarters.

A WHO Medical Officer has now been assigned to Khartoum to work with both the Rural Health Demonstration Area, El Huda, and the Ministry of Health, to enable the latter to organize a sound statistical division.

c. The most appropriate assistance from WHO would be award of fellowships to national personnel to study statistics and provision of supplies and equipment for statistical offices.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

1. General Statistical Services

The Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, is the central statistical agency.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

The Vital and Health Statistics Department, Ministry of Health and Public Assistance, is the agency responsible for vital and health statistics.

TUNISIA

1. General Statistical Services

The name of the Central Statistical Office is the "Service des Statistiques", in the Ministry of Planning and Finance. This Office is in charge of vital and health statistics.

2. Organization of Health Statistical Services

There is no statistical office in the Ministry of Health.