



ANNEX 1

JIU/REP/70/6-5

OBSERVATIONS ON THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
UNION IN MADAGASCAR

Report  
by  
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Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva, June 1970

National Telecommunications and Postal Institute, Antananarivo - INTIP MAG 5

1. I have few comments to make on this operation, which seems to me to justify the claim to successful institution-forming which is generally made on its behalf.

2. The project is now in a Second Phase, agreed primarily to give the four recently returned fellows the extra confidence which will be generated by a period of practical work alongside the UN experts. Nominally, the second phase, which began in January 1970, is due to end in 1972, but in fact all the experts with the exception of the Project Manager will have left by the middle of 1971. This means that at the time of writing there is effectively only one academic year of full aid to run and I wonder whether this will prove to be quite adequate. The prolongation of the project into a second phase appears to me to have been fully justified. Malgachisation of the PTT in Madagascar started only with the advent of independence in 1960 and in the early stages of the project there simply was no suitable youthful material to send abroad for training as future instructors at the proposed Institute. Those ultimately sent for study have returned and are now acquiring practical teaching experience, but there is a long way to go and pressures are great. I saw, for example, an expert and his counterpart approaching a group of waiting students and hoped that I should see the counterpart taking the class under the eye of his mentor. But I was disappointed; such was the pressure on facilities that they were taking different classes. I also learned that some of the counterparts were not yet fully conversant with all the equipment they would be called upon to maintain and demonstrate. If the present counterparts must indeed assume complete responsibility in just over twelve months - and this involves not only teaching students at the Institute but also training their successors in due course - it seems to me that the project may be in danger of finishing too soon to guarantee successful follow-through. I was told that the four counterparts were to spend the recess months of July to September in intensive study with their UN experts; this is comforting, but it is also a sign of legitimate anxiety. I recommend that the project manager be instructed to report fully and in detail on the readiness of the Malgache staff to assume full responsibility at the end of the project and I

would hope that sympathetic consideration might be given to the possibility of leaving behind, for a further period, stronger continuing support and encouragement, should this seem desirable. This is too promising a craft to spoil for want of the traditional coat of paint.

3. There is a postal aspect to the Institute's work, although this takes second place in its official title. I saw the class-room set aside for postal training and the mock-up post-office used for instruction. I was told, however, that the equipment held for demonstration was inadequate and I was shown a list of requirements which had been sent to the Director General of the Universal Postal Union, at the invitation of the latter, on the strength of a copy of a recent half-yearly report passed on to Bern by the ITU in Geneva. I was told that this same request had for years been the victim of jurisdictional dispute. UNDP had been unwilling to go outside the limits of the original request; ITU naturally considered that the request lay beyond its own sphere; UPU was sympathetic, but lacked budgetary provision; the Malgache Government was loath to consider a Technical Assistance complication in a Special Fund project.

4. Since the 1966 resolution of the Afro-Malgache Postal and Telecommunications Union - UAMPT - urging the use of training facilities within the region, the question of the proper equipment of the postal section of the INTP in Madagascar has become more urgent. It is, however, bound up with the problem of the relative capacity of the training centres at Antananarivo, Dakar and Abidjan, the vexed question of the method of financing studies ( i.e. by Agency fellowships, T.A. provision, or Government subsidy ) and the resulting probable flow of students. The INTP request included an annual score of fellowships for African postal students on which, in the absence of wider knowledge of the subject, I make no comment. Even for adequate instruction in postal practice in the limited domestic field of Madagascar, however, some further provision of instruments for demonstration purposes would clearly be desirable. The Institute, through lack of familiarity with the workings of the UN machine, had not pressed its case as effectively as it might have done and I left an oral recommendation with the Resident Representative to attend to this question when time served and to steer the request on to a more promising course than it has followed hitherto.

5. I should like to end on a familiar note - that of the production of texts. For two years I have inveighed against the apparent inefficiency of the production of text books at each ITU/UNDP telecommunications project, instead of having recourse to commercial text books or at least to centrally-produced manuals. At Antanetibe I found for the first time sets of commercially-produced text books which were used by the students, with only the locally idiosyncratic gaps filled by teaching material devised and produced by the project. If this can be done in Madagascar, the arguments advanced to me to show why it could not be done elsewhere seem to be fallacious.

Summary of Recommendations

1. That the project manager be instructed to report on the readiness of the Malgache staff to assume full responsibility at the end of the project ( Para. 2 )

2. That sympathetic consideration be given to the possibility of some continuing support, should that be considered desirable ( Para. 2 )

3. That the Resident Representative should advise the project manager on the best method of handling the outstanding request for teaching equipment for the postal section of the Institute ( Para. 4 ).

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A N N E X 2

Your ref.: JIU/70/264

Mr. Harry R. Wilmot  
Executive Secretary  
Joint Inspection Unit  
United Nations  
Palais des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10

Dear Mr. Wilmot,

I wish to thank you for your letter of 6 August forwarding a report prepared by Sir Leonard Scopes entitled "Observations on the work of the International Telecommunication Union in Madagascar" (JIU/REP/70/6-5) which we find most objective.

On point 2 however, I should like to make a minor clarification. The project is at present under supplementary assistance, and not in a Second Phase as was the original intention. This change was brought about when U.N.D.P. noted that the second request from Madagascar was merely for an extension of the project without any substantial change of objective.

We fully share Sir Leonard's anxiety concerning the phasing-out of the project in 1972 and withdrawal of all experts in the middle of 1971. Since we have a regional expert who is shortly due to visit the Comoro Islands we have asked him to call in at Madagascar to follow up on the recommendations made by Sir Leonard and to clear up one or two administrative matters.

The question of standardization of text books is at present under study by a Training Division recently established in our Technical Cooperation Department which is also charged with the task of devising new and more effective methods of training.

Concerning the postal aspect of the Institute, we are of course prepared to cooperate fully with the U.P.U. in any action that it proposes to undertake in the future.

I shall not fail to submit Sir Leonard's report to our Administrative Council together with his comments. Since however, the Council does not meet until May next year, action on the points raised in the report will already have been taken.

I am forwarding a copy of this letter to the Director-General of U.P.U. and to Mr. Hoffman, for information.

Yours sincerely,

Mohamed MILLI  
Secretary-General

Copy : The Director-General  
U.P.U., Berne

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
New York