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Colombo Plan Council Annual Report - 1959-60
Technical Co-operation cost £46.4 million
15116 Trainees; 1729 Experts

Since the inception, in 1950, of the Colombo Plan,

15116 South and South-East Asians have learnt new skills or attained higher standards of efficiency in skills previously learnt;

1729 experts have visited the region to perform and demonstrate a wide variety of highly technical tasks, and

equipment valued at £9.5 million has come into South and South-East Asia.

The overall cost of Colombo Plan technical co-operation - borne by countries providing the training or supplying the experts and equipment - is estimated at £46.4 million.

These facts are revealed in the Annual Report, released today, of the Council for Technical Co-operation in South and South-East Asia, popularly known as the Colombo Plan Council.

- 22 Countries -

The Council which functions in Colombo, Ceylon, consists of representatives, at high diplomatic level, of Colombo Plan countries.

There are 22 countries in the Colombo Plan fraternity, 16 in the region - Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, the Federation of Malaya, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, North Borneo, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - and six outside the region - Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and United States.

- The Report -

The Report of the Colombo Plan Council (for July 1959 - June 1960) is a 35,000 word document in seven chapters and 15 pages of appendices covering 18 items of statistical data. It deals only with one of the three main aspects of the Colombo Plan - technical co-operation, that is to say the provision of training and the supply of experts and equipment. It does not deal with the other two aspects, the national development plans of the region and capital aid from outside. The Consultative Committee (of Ministers of Colombo Plan

countries) which is to consider and discuss this Report at its forthcoming meeting in Tokyo, itself deals with and produces an annual report on all three aspects i.e. on the progress of economic development in the countries of the region and the injection of capital aid from outside as well as technical co-operation.

- Outgoing year -

The Council Report records that during the outgoing year (July 1959-June 1960) 4268 persons received training in skills ranging from steel engineering to journalism and printing; 535 new experts - not counting those already in the field - and equipment valued at £2,966,221 came into the Region.

- Trainees -

Six of the 4268 trainees came from Brunei; 101 from Burma; 176 from Cambodia; 168 from Ceylon; 1045 from India; 457 from Indonesia; 155 from Laos; 160 from Malaya; 251 from Nepal; 45 from North Borneo; 297 from Pakistan; 365 from the Philippines; 53 from Sarawak; 14 from Singapore; 570 from Thailand and 403 from Vietnam. One trainee came from Japan and one from New Zealand.

They received training in Australia (425); Burma (5); Canada (277); Ceylon (12); India (272); Japan (63); New Zealand (70); Pakistan (14); the Philippines (6); United Kingdom (613); and United States (2511).

- Experts -

Of the 535 experts supplied during the year Australia provided 50; Canada 34; India 4; Indonesia 1; Japan 62; New Zealand 14; United Kingdom 46 and United States 324.

It is a significant fact that during the year Australia received an expert from Indonesia. Other recipients of experts were Burma 8; Cambodia 24; Ceylon 46; the Federation of Malaya 8; India 93; Indonesia 66; Laos 33; Nepal 15; North Borneo 6; Pakistan 100; the Philippines 25; Sarawak 4; Singapore 11; Thailand 70 and Vietnam 23. Two experts were provided to the ECAFE sponsored Mekong River project.

- United States Aid -

The Report records that United States which joined the Colombo Plan in 1951 became a full member of the Council in January 1959. At the 1959 Consultative Committee it was agreed that all United States technical assistance should be counted as part of the Colombo Plan Co-operation. Procedures have been progressively

worked out in the course of the year to make it possible to present the facts and figures about the United States aid in terms comparable with those used for other countries.

- Aid within the Region -

The Report underlines the fact that in a number of practical and technical skills, the countries of South and South-East Asia are now able to provide a high level of training for their own people. "It is a distinctive feature of the Colombo Plan that member countries which have good training facilities to offer are willing to make them available to others that still lack them. Under Colombo Plan technical co-operation - which means in every case that training is provided at the cost of the host government - India has already trained over 1,000 people from neighbouring Colombo Plan countries." Of the eleven countries which provided training facilities to their Colombo Plan partners in 1959-60, India comes fifth after the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. Burma, Ceylon, the Federation of Malaya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand also appear as 'donors' in this respect.

- Survey of Technical Facilities -

Impressed by the importance of obtaining full information on facilities available in South and South-East Asia for the training of technicians within the Region, the Council, with the prior approval of the Consultative Committee, invited the Ford Foundation to assist the Colombo Plan Bureau in the conduct of a survey. The Foundation acceded to this request and a survey will be conducted during 1960-61.

It is difficult to say, observes the Report, "whether the supply is meeting the demand when the demand is increasing all the time. The population figures for the area, show that the countries of the region already contain over 100 million more people than when the Plan was conceived in 1950. Whether this increase should be counted as additional pairs of hands to produce new wealth or merely as mouths to be fed and bodies to be kept alive depends upon the opportunities now being opened up for new development and upon the spread of technical skill to bring new resources into fruitful production. The Colombo Plan countries are working together to avert a tragic outcome to this unprecedented population increase. But only sustained effort can ensure that new development keeps a step ahead."

- Co-operation with other Agencies -

The Report points out that the Colombo Plan and other aid-giving agencies do not compete; instead they complement and augment each other's activities. It mentions the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Asia Foundation, among other international organisations and private agencies which are engaged in providing aid to the Region on one or more jointly assisted projects. The Mekong River Project, sponsored by ECAFE, the Solo Rehabilitation Centre in Indonesia are among the many examples given of joint activity.

- Administration of Co-operation -

Discussing the Administration of Technical Co-operation, the Report says the need of countries in South and South-East Asia for technical assistance is not in doubt; their continuing and increasing requests confirm it. The willingness of most of the governments who are partners in the Colombo Plan to provide technical assistance is also not in doubt: they reaffirmed it at the 1959 Consultative Committee and are providing training places, experts and equipment in increasing measure. The Council's concern is to see whether the provision is meeting the need expeditiously, economically, and to the mutual satisfaction of the governments concerned. "If a programme of technical co-operation is to be effective, the right trainees must be selected for the available training facilities; experts must be selected for tasks which they can accomplish with lasting benefit; suitable equipment must be requested supplied and then put to good use."

- "Working Smoothly" -

Ten years is too short a time says the Report to bring about dramatic changes in the welfare of over 700 million people. "Nor can the Colombo Plan alone claim credit for the undeniable changes for the better that have occurred. The Council is not in a position to assess these changes in relation to the continuing need: but it can record that the novel forms of international co-operation that it was convened to promote only nine and a half years ago are accepted and working smoothly in South and South-East Asia and in the Colombo Plan countries outside the area."