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STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Tenth session

PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME

1. The Commission will recall that it has made a review of priorities during previous sessions in the light of then existing resolutions of the Council and rules of procedure. In addition, at the tenth session, the Commission has examined and commented on a report by the Secretary-General (Section II, doc. E/CN.3/249) on the work programme of the Commission and of the Office as requested by Council resolution 664B(XYIV).
2. Resolution 402B(XIII), which was adopted subsequent to the sixth session of the Commission, established procedures which are recommended in connexion with the establishment of priorities. These are as follows:
  - (a) The Secretary-General should report to each commission session the action which he has taken to carry out the commission's programmes according to the priorities previously established, and submit suggestions of priorities for future work, including suggestions regarding projects which might be deferred or eliminated;
  - (b) The programme of work of each commission should be divided into broad subjects, a differentiation being made, where practicable, between those of higher and lower priority;
  - (c) The broad subjects should be subdivided into three groups, the first group consisting of continuing projects of high priority, the second group of ad hoc projects also of high priority, and the third group of projects of lower priority, which might be deferred or eliminated, or undertaken only in so far as resources permitted;

(d) It is not necessary to indicate the relative importance of individual projects in the first and second groups, respectively mentioned in (c); but, within the group of subjects of lower priority, individual projects should be listed, if possible, in their order of priority, or some indication of priority should be given;

(e) In the case of ad hoc projects, there should be an indication of probable duration;

(f) The Secretary-General, within his existing authority, should have discretion as to the scheduling of work in order that the best use may be made of existing staff and resources and to take account of unforeseen circumstances which may arise.

3. The following paragraphs, based on the discussion of the Commission at its tenth session, contain the proposals of the Secretary-General on the priorities which might be accorded to the various projects reviewed by the Commission.

4. Continuing projects of high priority

(1) The maintenance of the systematic publication of statistics, together with the development of improved indexes and bibliographies, with attention to speeding up the release of certain publications and to reviewing the contents of existing publications in order to permit the inclusion of additional analytical tables within the total programme.

(2) The maintenance and development of publications dealing with statistical methods, with particular reference to the need for the inclusion in these publications of additional material concerning the practices of national offices in solving problems of collection and analysis.

(3) The further development, as necessary, of mechanisms for regional consultations on statistical questions including strengthening of services available through the regional statisticians, especially in connexion with the statistical needs of the less well-developed countries.

(4) Advice and assistance in giving effect to existing standards or guiding principles for the improvement of national and international statistics, together with the exchange of information on problems of methods and applications:

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- (a) population and housing censuses,
- (b) vital statistics,
- (c) social statistics,
- (d) basic industrial statistics,
- (e) index numbers of industrial production,
- (f) external trade statistics,
- (g) distribution statistics,
- (h) national accounts,
- (i) capital formation statistics,
- (j) questions of methodology, including sampling.

5. Ad hoc projects also of high priority

- (1) Comparative study of national practices in the field of distribution statistics, including various methodological considerations in the conduct of large-scale inquiries.
- (2) Completion of technical studies of definitions and methods for censuses of housing.
- (3) Studies designed to improve the accuracy of vital statistics including experimental studies on methods of obtaining vital statistics in countries where the conventional registration methods may not be applicable, and an analysis of the methods and uses of population registers.
- (4) Continue to work toward the improvement of comparability in external trade statistics, especially trade-by-country statistics and methods by which distinctions might be made between capital goods and consumers' goods. In this work full use should be made of regional and other consultations with the statistical offices of Member States; to investigate the statistical treatment of goods traded in free ports or zones.
- (5) Continue to study, with the assistance of experts, if necessary, suggestions for statistical programmes on the characteristics of business enterprises, including proposals for tabulations showing important aspects of economic activity; examine the question of what reporting unit, i.e., the enterprise or establishment, would be most

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suitable for reporting different types of data; examine methods for inter-relating data for establishments and enterprises, taking account of different record-keeping practices.

(6) Complete the revisions suggested in connexion with the International Standard Industrial Classification and re-issue the ISIC for general use.

(7) Continue study of national experience with the existing standards for basic industrial statistics and prepare any proposed revisions in definitions and concepts which may appear necessary, including proposals for censuses of industrial production.

(8) Continue to examine alternative methods of compiling index numbers of wholesale prices; develop suggestions for pricing highly fabricated goods and other problems of collection and examine methods for general purpose indexes of retail sales.

(9) Collect information from Member States on indexes of national product and expenditure in constant prices, on the related price index numbers and on the methods of computing these indexes; to prepare a study of the conceptual and statistical problems in this field in consultation with interested regional and international organizations and individual experts.

(10) Develop methods for the compilation of national accounts, including capital formation statistics in countries at a very early stage of economic development.

(11) Formulation of a statistical programme in the field of income distribution; revision of the study "Statistics of the Distribution of Personal Income" and appraisal of the conceptual and statistical problems in this field.

(12) Complete the revision of the System of National Accounts, explore methods and possibilities of completing, with the aid of an expert group if necessary, the systematic comparison of SNA with the system used by countries with centrally planned economies, in co-operation with regional statistical groups and the statistical offices of Member States.

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(13) Development of standards for the improvement of social statistics generally including statistics bearing on conditions (or levels) of living, co-operating with the specialized agencies towards this end; prepare preliminary co-ordinated plans for a Co-operation of Social Studies to be issued in 1963.

(14) Investigate methods, in co-operation with ILO and UNESCO, for the statistical studies of the supply of and requirements for scientific and technical manpower, especially with reference to the needs of less well developed countries.

(15) Examine the techniques of operating research which might be employed by less well developed countries to evaluate the requirements for human and material resources in broad sectors of the economy.

6. Projects of lower priority

Standards for statistics of:

transport

crime

migration

tourism.

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