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STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Twelfth session  
Item 20 of the provisional agenda

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 Economic and Social Council and rules of procedure.
2. Resolution 402 B (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 projects 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 paragraph, based on the discussion of the Commission at its twelfth session, contains the proposals of the Secretary-General on the priorities which might be accorded to the various projects reviewed by the Commission. The Commission may wish to suggest rearrangements among these proposals and to consider others which might be considered for priority attention in the light of the probable requirements of the Development Decade (resolution 1710 (XVI) of the General Assembly). The Commission will recall the discussion of this subject contained in paragraphs 16-19 of document E/CN.3/286, in particular that part of the resolution which requests the Secretary-General "to review facilities for the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of statistical and other information required for charting economic and social development and for providing constant measurement of progress towards the objectives of the Decade."

Continuing projects of high priority

4. Extend, as appropriate and necessary, the systematic publication of international statistics, together with the development of appropriate indexes and bibliographies.
5. The establishment of a centre for the processing of international trade statistics by electronic data processing methods.
6. Maintenance and development of publications dealing with statistical methods, with particular reference to the need for the inclusion in these publications of material concerning the practices of national offices in solving problems of collection and analysis.
7. Maintenance and development of arrangements for regional consultations and for regional advisers on statistical questions, especially in connexion with the statistical needs of the less developed countries in co-operation with the specialized agencies and other institutions concerned.
8. Intensify activities connected with the training of middle-level and higher professional personnel in the less developed countries in co-operation with inter-governmental and national institutions.

9. Other activities designed to assist in the more rapid development of national statistics required for the planning of economic and social development, (a) by means of increased utilization of the facilities of the technical co-operation programmes, and (b) by active participation in the Economic Projections and Programming Centre envisaged in resolution 1708 (XVI).

10. Continue the work of improving the comparability of statistical data of Member States having different economic and social systems in order to contribute to the development of mutually advantageous economic ties between them.

11. Advice and assistance in giving effect to existing standards or guiding principles for the improvement of national and international statistics under the following heads, together with the exchange of information on problems of methods and applications:

- (a) Population and housing censuses;
- (b) Vital statistics;
- (c) Statistics for social programmes;
- (d) Basic industrial statistics;
- (e) Index numbers of industrial production;
- (f) External trade and transport statistics;
- (g) Distribution statistics;
- (h) National accounts;
- (i) Capital formation statistics;
- (j) Classification of industrial and related data according to kind of economic activity;
- (k) Basic statistical series for use in programmes of economic and social development;
- (l) Housing statistics;
- (m) Energy statistics;
- (n) Questions of methodology, including sampling, and information on electronic data processing.

Ad hoc projects also of high priority

12. Revise and issue the document dealing with the systems of industrial statistics of highly industrialized countries.
13. Investigate major uses and requirements for industrial statistics, including analytical ratios and other interrelations among the various items of data.
14. Revise, with appropriate expansions, the publication Patterns of Industrial Growth, for re-issue in 1963.
15. Prepare a detailed study of the problems, suitable concepts, methods and techniques for the collection of data on construction in consultation with organizations concerned.
16. Prepare a comparative study of national practices, concepts and definitions on the subject of distribution statistics.
17. Preparation of a study relating the items of the SITC, Revised, to the groups and items of the ISIC and study of commodity classifications for use in industrial and related statistics.
18. Complete the special supplement to the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics.
19. Prepare a manual as a supplement to the System of National Accounts including a discussion of practical methods of application of the SNA principles and of the practical consequences of other related principles.
20. Study the conceptual and statistical problems in the compilation of indexes of national product and expenditure in constant prices.
21. Study of techniques of achieving international comparability of the main aggregates by the use of a common method of valuation.
22. Study of methods of estimating capital formation.
23. Complete the study of points of correspondence and difference in the SNA system and the system used in the socialist countries, in co-operation with the Conference of European Statisticians.
24. Consult with specialized agencies and regional organizations concerning the content of a 1970 programme of censuses, their relation to other inquiries and the timing of the various phases.
25. Make necessary revisions to the document on continuous population registers and issue as a technical study.

26. Complete the provisional issue of the Compendium of Social Statistics being prepared by the Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes.
27. Complete the Handbook on Household Surveys being prepared by the Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes.
28. Study of possible methods to improve international migration (including tourist) statistics in consultation with the organizations concerned.
29. Examine the status of conventional registration systems for vital statistics preparatory to a revision of the Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods.
30. In co-operation with organizations concerned, study of methods to obtain vital statistics for countries where conventional methods are inapplicable.
31. Study further the possibilities of methods for the construction of socio-economic classifications, which might result in improved international comparability, in co-operation with interested agencies.

Ad hoc projects of lower priority

32. Prepare a technical publication on the subject of collecting and compiling representative and comparable wholesale price statistics; formulate a draft set of guiding principles for consideration by the Commission.
33. Keep under study national requirements, practices and problems in the collection and compilation of statistics of the revenue and expenditure and assets and liabilities of non-financial enterprises; with a view to the development, ultimately, of suggestions as to the items of data to be gathered from the profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts, and as to their definition and classification, in consultation with the International Monetary Fund.
34. Prepare, in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, studies on developments, practices and experience in the compilation of accounts on financial statistics in relation to accounts on income, expenditure and production statistics and to report to the Commission at a future session.
35. Continue the study in co-operation with interested regional organizations and individual experts, of integrated systems of input-output flows and national accounts.
36. Prepare a study of the industrial statistics of selected economies in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

37. Revise and complete the methodological study on the estimation of housing needs.
38. Collaborate in the development of programmes of current housing and building statistics.
39. Assemble materials for the ultimate preparation of a handbook on housing census methods, based, as far as possible, on the experience and evaluation of the 1960 censuses.
40. Examine methods of population projections to determine if a technical guide on this subject should be prepared.

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CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

(Memorandum by the Secretary-General)

1. The Commission's attention is called to the fact that pursuant to a series of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly starting with 593 (VI) of 4 February 1952 and culminating in 1272 (XIII) of 14 November 1958, the Economic and Social Council on 31 July 1959 adopted resolution 742 II (XXVIII) which requested the preparation of a summary of action taken by the Council and its subsidiary bodies (of which the Statistical Commission is one) to reduce the quantity of documentation produced.
2. The Commission may wish to note that in accordance with the prescribed policy, the Secretary-General issued 1,052 pages of documentation for the eleventh (1960) session and 664 pages for the twelfth (1962) session, as compared with 1,321 pages for the tenth (1958) session.
3. In view of a number of comments made by members of the Commission during the twelfth session, the Secretariat has the impression that some of the documents did not contain enough details to satisfy the Commission. The Commission is, therefore, invited to comment on whether this reduction in quantity of documentation has affected the carrying out of its business.

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PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME

Statements of Financial Implications

1. In the Priorities of the Commission's Work Programme (document E/CN.3/L.58) under item Ad Hoc projects also of high priority appears the project for the revision, with appropriate expansion, of the publication Patterns of Industrial Growth, for re-issue in 1963.
2. The existing publication, Patterns of Industrial Growth, 1938-1958 (Statistical Papers, Series P, No. 1) was issued in September 1960. This publication was designed to furnish comparable data on the growth and structure of the industrial sector of countries and on the dimensions and pattern of the expansion and distribution of industrial activity in the various regions of the world and countries of differing degrees of industrial development, as well as the world as a whole.
3. The publication was very favourably received and has been so much in demand that it is almost out of stock at the present time. Within the resources of the Statistical Office, a revision and expansion of this publication has been under way for some time now and it is hoped that the work could be completed in time for the revised version being published during 1963.
4. It is estimated that the revised version will be a substantially larger one and will require to be published in two volumes: the first one consisting of 300 printed pages comprising 113 pages of bilingual text, 25 pages of charts and about 160 pages of tables. Volume II would be about 500 printed pages, comprising 130 pages of bilingual text and 370 pages of tables.



5. Assuming a print order of the same magnitude as the original 1960 version (5,300), it is estimated that the cost of commercially printing the revised version would be about \$55,000. This figure assumes that part of the type standing from the preparation of the original version can be used for the publication of the revised version. Every effort will be made to reduce the net charge to the regular United Nations budget through the use of internal reproduction facilities, both at Headquarters and Geneva, specifically in regard to Volume I.

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