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STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Thirteenth session  
Item 25 of the provisional agenda

PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME

(Memorandum by the Secretary-General)

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. In paragraph 11 of the annex to resolution 402 B (XIII), which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council subsequent to the sixth session of the Commission, procedures 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 paragraphs, based on the discussion of the Commission at its thirteenth session, contain 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).

#### Continuing projects of high priority

4. Systematic collection, compilation and publication of international statistics, together with the development of appropriate indexes and bibliographies.

5. The collection, processing and dissemination of data on international trade by electronic data processing methods; extension of electronic data processing methods to other fields of international statistics.

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. Maintenance of activities for 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. Continuation of 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) 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) Statistics of prices;
- (k) Classification of industrial and related data according to kind of economic activity;
- (l) Basic statistical series for use in programmes of economic and social development;
- (m) Housing statistics;
- (n) Energy statistics;
- (o) Questions of methodology, including sampling, and information on electronic data processing.

Ad hoc projects of high priority

12. Compilation and publication of recommendations for the definition and statistical treatment of the main categories of commodities in the inward and outward flows of international trade, together with descriptions of national practices in this field.

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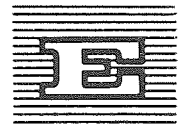
13. Arrangements for consultations of statisticians and customs officials to improve the international availability of detailed external trade statistics.
14. Revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification.
15. Revision and publication of cross-classification of the items of the Standard International Trade Classification and the International Standard Industrial Classification.
16. Study of the indicators of industrial activity.
17. Preparation of recommendations for a selected list of commodities for use in industrial statistics.
18. Review of recommendations on annual and more frequent industrial inquiries.
19. Revision and publication of the study on construction statistics.
20. Revision and extension of the System of National Accounts; study of the Material Product System and methods of linking the two systems.
21. Study of the concepts, classifications and methods of statistics of income distribution within the framework of the systems of national accounts and balances, and the incorporation of the appropriate parts of these statistics into the System of National Accounts.
22. Study of the concepts, classifications and methods of balance-sheet statistics that are integrated into the System of National Accounts.
23. Study of the measurement of economic growth.
24. Study of statistics of manpower and population in relation to the systems of national accounts and balances.
25. Revision and publication of the study on problems of input-output tables.
26. Study of systems of price indexes and the concepts and methods of estimates in constant prices.
27. Study of the problems and methods of a common basis of valuation for national accounting and other data.
28. Revision of the study of the national accounting practices of countries.
29. Recommendations for population and housing censuses to be taken around 1970, including regional consultations.
30. Preparation of a new issue of the Compendium of Social Statistics.

31. Revision and issuance of the Handbook of Household Surveys.
32. Revision and issuance of the Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods.
33. Experimentation in methods of establishing a "data bank" of population census information.
34. Revision of the Handbook of Population Census Methods.
35. Publication of a handbook on housing censuses and revision of Statistical Indicators of Housing Conditions.
36. Study of demographic sample survey methods.
37. Initiation of a study of methods of training in statistical technology, designed to assist in the economic development of the under-developed countries.

Ad hoc projects of lower priority

38. Review of methods in international travel statistics, in co-operation with interested international and regional organizations.
39. Study of methods in transport statistics relating to movement of goods in international trade, in co-operation with the regional economic commissions.

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PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME

(Memorandum by the Secretary-General)

Corrigendum

Insert before paragraph 12

While the Commission recognizes that, in accordance with the resolution of the Economic and Social Council referred to in paragraph 2, it is not necessary for it to indicate the relative importance of the ad hoc items of higher priority, nevertheless in view of the possibility that the Commission may meet again in 1966 it feels that it is desirable to state that it attaches particular importance to substantial progress being made before the fourteenth session of the Commission on the items in the field of national accounts and population censuses, particularly on items 20, 21, 22, 29, 29 A and 29 B.

Add items:

- 24 A Study of methods of assessing requirements for scientific and technological manpower and of expenditure on scientific and technological research.
- 29 A Study of the methods of developing vital statistics registration systems and of interim methods of providing vital rates by appropriate survey methods.

Reword the following items:

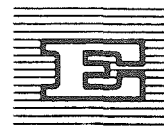
14. Interim revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification as required for use in the revised systems of national accounts.

24. Study of statistics of manpower and population in relation both to the systems of national accounts and balances and to the needs for such data in programming and planning.
26. Study of systems of price indexes and the concepts and methods of estimates in constant prices with particular reference to national accounting aggregates.
27. Study of techniques for improving international comparisons of the main aggregates of the national accounts by the use of common methods of valuation.

Move item 36 to 29 B.

Regard item 39 as of higher priority.

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PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME

(Statement of Financial Implications submitted  
by the Secretary-General)

1. Based on the discussions in the Commission's current session, a work programme for the period 1965-67 has been drawn up in document E/CN.3/L.64. While the majority of the items on the work programme in the priority categories can be undertaken from within resources currently available and expected to be available for 1966, there are a few which could entail additional expenditures in 1966 and 1967 as set out below:

A. Continuing Projects of High Priority

- (i) Under Item 5 the expansion of electronic data processing methods to other fields of international statistics is envisaged. With the installation of a United Nations computer system in the latter half of 1965 the only additional costs will be those for programming. Taking, for 1966, demographic statistics as the first of the areas for the application of electronic data processing methods, an amount of \$10,000 will be required for fees for a programming consultant.
- (ii) Item 6 calls for the 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. This project would involve a compilation about 250 mimeographed pages long of recommendations of the Commission



over the years, and of material provided by Governments on national practices. The compilation could be undertaken during 1966 from within available resources. Its publication in the three languages early in 1967 would cost about \$7,000, and provision would be made in the initial estimates for 1967 for this expenditure.

B. Ad Hoc Projects of High Priority

- (i) Item 2 calls for the convening of a meeting of statisticians and customs officials to improve the international availability of detailed external trade statistics. It is hoped that such a meeting could be convened in New York in the latter half of 1966. On the assumption that the participants at the meeting will be no one more than 30/35, that their travel costs would be met by their respective Governments, and that the meetings last no more than week, no additional costs would be entailed. It is hoped that the work load on the translation and reproduction of the preparatory documentation (300 pages), and the report on the meeting, 50 to 60 pages (which would require about \$7,000 if costed separately) could be absorbed within available resources.
- (ii) Items 10 and 11 which call for studies on the System of National Accounts, would require (a) the use of Consultants, and (b) the convening of a group of up to 8 experts, in 1966 and again in 1967. It is estimated that approximately eight man-months of consultant services will be required in 1966 (cost \$10,000) and six (cost \$7,500) in 1967. As regards the group of experts, assuming that the meetings extend over two weeks, and are scheduled to conform with the annual calendar of conferences, the costs for the travel and subsistence of the experts would be approximately \$9,000 in each of the years.
- (iii) Item 18 calls for the drawing up of recommendations for population and housing censuses to be taken around 1970. This would require the use of a group of seven to eight experts who, meeting at headquarters for ten days, would draw up a set of recommendations

for consideration by the Commission at its next session in the latter half of 1966. The travel and subsistence for this expert group is estimated at \$9,000.

(iv) The initiation of a study of methods of training in statistical technology called for in item 26, would require the use of three man-months of consultant services in 1966. The consultant would undertake the preparation of the study, in consultation with UNESCO and ILO. The fees for the consultant and his travel to Europe for consultations with the two specialized agencies concerned are estimated at some \$6,000.

(v) The work programme also calls for the revision and publication of certain manuals and handbooks (see items 19 and 24); the work on revision will be undertaken during 1966/67 from within the resources available to the Statistical Office. Appropriate provision will be included in the budget estimates for printing the revised manuals and handbooks.

2. In summary the additional costs in 1966 and 1967 for implementing the priority items on the programme of work are as follows:

	<u>Consultants</u>	<u>Expert Groups</u>
1966	\$26,000	\$18,000
1967	\$ 7,500	\$ 9,000

4. In order to avoid seeking supplementary credits for 1966 through the submission to the General Assembly later in the year of revisions to the budget estimates, every effort will be made to accommodate these priority items within the limits of such resources as are made available for 1966 by the General Assembly. A report would be made to the next session of the Commission (tentatively planned for the second half of 1966) on progress made and work remaining to be undertaken.

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