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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 while the number of pages of documentation presented to the tenth, eleventh and twelfth sessions had been reduced from 1,321 to 1,052 to 664, the number for the thirteenth session rose to 1,619 pages. The increase was brought about partly because of the three-year period which elapsed between the twelfth and thirteenth sessions (whereas the usual period between sessions is two years) and partly because of the nature of the documents themselves.
3. For example, through the courtesy of the Thomas J. Watson Research Center of the International Business Machines Corporation, it has been possible to prepare a preliminary key between the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and the Edinaia Tovarnaya Nomenklatura Vneshney Torgovli (ETNVT) of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (E/CN.3/314, 119 pages).

4. In line with the Commission's request "that the Secretariat, in future, keep in mind the need for sufficient detail in documents that might be of particular value to the less developed countries" (E/3633, para. 141), the document on the systems of industrial statistics in developing countries (E/CN.3/309, 151 pages) contains detailed appendices describing the systems used in four different countries. The information is considered valuable for the developing countries, inasmuch as the diversity of the four systems highlights various facets of the problems of the most appropriate system of industrial statistics for a developing country and the best path along which the country might move towards the system.

5. The thirteenth session of the Commission comes at a time when the 1970 population and housing census programmes are being formulated; this has necessitated a presentation of a progress report on the programmes (E/CN.3/337, 21 pages), as well as the draft recommendations for a population census (E/CN.3/330, 130 pages) and for a housing census (E/CN.3/332, 89 pages).

6. The Commission also has before it proposals for the revision of the System of National Accounts, 1952 (E/CN.3/320, 188 pages); this report results from the deliberations of an expert group convened at United Nations Headquarters in December 1964.

7. The Commission is invited to comment on this subject generally. It may also wish to consider whether steps might be taken, in reviewing the long-term programme to plan the items of the agenda over successive sessions in order that items involving heavy documentation and lengthy consideration may be distributed over a number of sessions.
