



UNITED NATIONS
 ECONOMIC
 AND
 SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
 GENERAL

E/CN.3/379
 10 January 1968

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
 Fifteenth session
 Item 8 (d) of the provisional agenda

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING STATISTICS

PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPROVEMENT IN HOUSING STATISTICS, 1964-1967

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As part of a Progress Report on Statistics for Social Programmes, 1962-1964 (E/CN.3/335) the Statistical Commission had before it, at its thirteenth session, a report on housing statistics. In connexion with the over-all development of statistics for social programmes the Commission emphasized the desirability of establishing a closer relationship between social statistics and economic statistics, particularly those relevant to the system of national accounts. "The Commission expressed the view that the Secretary-General should continue work on the general lines discussed in the document (E/CN.3/335) and prepare a further progress report for the Commission at its fifteenth session."^{1/} In accordance with this request, and as one aspect of the development of statistics for social programmes, the following progress report on housing statistics is presented.

2. The report is set forth in six parts dealing with (a) the need for housing statistics, (b) principal methods of collection at the national level and developments in connexion with each method, (c) the standardization of definitions and classifications, (d) improvements in housing statistics at the national level, (e) collection, storage, retrieval and dissemination of housing statistics at the international level and (f) development assistance activities.

II. THE NEED FOR HOUSING STATISTICS

3. Because in both developed and developing countries, the need for housing statistics and their systematic collection are of comparatively recent origin, it may be useful to recall some of the principal purposes for which they are required. With increased emphasis on planning as a means of promoting economic and social advancement, a growing awareness has emerged that a parallel development of statistical series is required both at the national and international levels as a basis for the formulation of policies and programmes.

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13, paras. 169, 170.

A. At the national level

4. At the national level, housing statistics are required mainly for the formulation of national development plans and for the preparation and implementation of housing programmes. For the formulation of over-all development plans they represent one of the many statistical series required for an appraisal of the various sectors of the economy, for the formulation of policy and for the preparation of action programmes. Since housing represents not only an overriding social need but also involves a substantial degree of capital investment and other economic activity in all countries, the importance of planning the housing sector along with other sectors of the economy is evident.

5. A similarly wide array of data is required for national housing programmes but here the emphasis is on more detailed information which describes housing conditions and changes in the conditions over time and which, in addition, permits the underlying causes of these conditions to be identified. A series of regional seminars on housing statistics and programmes reached substantial accord with respect to the statistical series required for the formulation, implementation and appraisal of housing programmes and these are set forth in the respective reports.^{2/}

6. The formulation of plans and programmes does not represent the only purpose for which housing information is required, however. Information on housing starts provides a sensitive indicator of economic trends, and information on the volume of investment in dwelling construction is required for the system of national accounts as well as for purposes more directly connected with housing.

7. Serious housing problems sometimes focus attention on the need for reliable information concerning the housing situation. In many developing countries housing conditions have deteriorated to a critical level and failure to provide the necessary data concerning these situations is resulting in a rash of estimates of dubious reliability. The difficulty appears to be, however, that solutions to the problems cannot always wait for reliable information to become available and planners are forced to arrive at some kind of quantitative measures upon which to base their programmes.

^{2/} Report of the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2-25 September 1962 (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 63.II.G.14); Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Asia and the Far East, Copenhagen, Denmark, 25 August-14 September 1963 (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 65.II.F.12); Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Africa, Copenhagen, Denmark, 31 August-15 September 1966 (E/CN.14/CAS.5/16).

B. At the international level

8. A growing recognition of the need for external assistance to Governments for the improvement of housing conditions has brought with it an additional need for statistical data on housing at the international level. Recipient countries are required to furnish factual information concerning housing conditions and housing activity within the framework of their economic and social systems, and to demonstrate the manner in which external assistance will be used and its probable effect on housing conditions, as well as its possible influence with respect to the nationally established aims of economic and social development. Furthermore, to be most effective, both bilateral and multilateral assistance should be carefully planned. Knowledge based on comparable data concerning levels of housing, rates of dwelling construction being achieved and related information is essential, therefore, if maximum benefits are to be derived.

III. PRINCIPAL METHODS OF COLLECTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AND
DEVELOPMENTS IN CONNEXION WITH EACH METHOD

9. Housing censuses, housing sample surveys and a system of current housing statistics represent the principal methods by which housing statistics are collected. Less frequently, housing information is gathered through the use of multisubject household surveys or as a secondary topic in surveys concerning some other subject or the information may be collected by maintaining permanent housing registers. The frequency and efficiency with which these inquiries are carried out, and the adequacy of compilations such as registers, will determine the availability and quality of information concerning the housing stock and its occupants and concerning housing activity such as construction, demolition, conversion. For maximum use to be made of the data collected, the various means of collection need to be carefully co-ordinated with respect to the geographic divisions, timing, topics investigated and the concepts, definitions and classifications employed. Special efforts may be required to maintain such consistency where housing information is collected in an inquiry concerning another topic, for example, a health survey in which information is sought on the number of persons per room.

10. Inquiries aimed at the collection of housing statistics also need to be co-ordinated with other statistical activities which comprise a national system of data collection. It must be borne in mind that very often data from housing

inquiries will need to be integrated and used as part of a broad array of statistical series assembled for such purposes as the formulation of national plans for economic and social development, the preparation of urban development plans and housing programmes and the measurement of levels of living. In this connexion it may be noted that a paper dealing with co-ordination between population and housing censuses and of these censuses with other statistical inquiries and compilations^{3/} was prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations for the regional seminars on organization and conduct of population and housing censuses described in the Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes^{4/} which is also before the Commission.

11. The progress achieved with respect to the development and improvement of the principal methods of collecting housing statistics is outlined below.

A. Housing censuses

12. Since 1964, the efforts of the Statistical Office with respect to housing censuses have been concentrated on the promotion of censuses and on the development and improvement of census methodology with a view to providing the data most urgently required for national purposes while at the same time achieving a reasonable degree of international comparability.

13. A significant increase has occurred since 1950 with respect to the number of countries which have utilized housing censuses as a method of collecting housing information. During the 1950 census decade (1945-1954), eighty-four countries carried out a housing census; the number increased to 139 during the 1960 census decade and, from information received from countries concerning their census plans, around the same number will probably carry out housing censuses during the 1970 decade.^{5/}

3/ Co-ordination between housing censuses and population censuses and of these censuses with other statistical inquiries and compilations
(E/CN.11/ASTAT/SPHC/L.11).

4/ E/CN.3/378.

5/ These figures refer to nationwide censuses and do not include partial censuses covering urban areas or principal cities which have been carried out by a number of countries. For more detailed information concerning censuses carried out and planned, reference may be made to the Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes (E/CN.3/378).

14. There appears to be a levelling off in the number of countries planning to carry out housing censuses in the 1970 census decade compared with the 1960 decade. A similar trend may be observed as far as population censuses are concerned but this is to be expected since most countries are now carrying out population censuses on a regular basis. However, the number of countries which carry out housing censuses regularly, or which have ever carried out a housing census, does not warrant a similar slackening in the upward trend for housing censuses. Thus, it would appear that further encouragement and assistance will be required if some of the countries which failed to carry out a housing census in the 1960 census decade are to do so during the 1970 decade. In this connexion it may be noted that the United Nations Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, at its third session in 1965, cited the active participation of Member States in the 1970 World Housing Census Programme as one of the activities required to accelerate the solution of housing and urbanization problems.^{6/}

15. The work with respect to improvements in census methodology has culminated in the publication of Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses^{7/}, the development of which is described in detail in Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes.^{8/}

B. Housing sample surveys

16. This is an important field in which, unfortunately because of a lack of resources, little has been done with respect to the development of methodology, although material has been collected for subsequent analysis. Because housing censuses are usually carried out at ten-year intervals, sample surveys provide a useful means of obtaining up-to-date information during the intercensal period and they are also required to provide information on certain aspects of housing not covered by the census.

^{6/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 9, para. 24.

^{7/} United Nations publication, Sales No.: 67.XVII.4.

^{8/} Op. cit.

17. Unlike the housing census, in which, for the most part, questions are simple and straightforward, surveys are very often directed at the collection of data which, because of its technical nature, requires specially trained enumerators or enumerators with technical knowledge. It would be desirable, therefore, if housing survey methods could be developed in close collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Housing, Building and Planning. Technical collaboration is required to identify the topics which it would be useful to collect by means of sample surveys and to establish the possibilities as well as the limitations of this type of inquiry with respect to its use in providing the necessary data for planning purposes. The formulation of questions concerning the technical aspects of housing should be carefully studied so that questions which are as simple as possible from the point of view of collection might be used to elicit the required information.

18. The seminar on sampling in connexion with population and housing censuses, scheduled to take place in Africa in 1968 (E/CN.3/378, paras. 41, 42), may be expected to contribute substantially to the future work on housing sample surveys.

C. System of current housing statistics

19. Current housing statistics refer to the collection and compilation of information on those activities which bring about changes in the housing stock (both increases and decreases) during a specified period of time. Additions to the stock of dwellings may result from dwelling construction, conversions which result in additional dwellings, reconstruction and major repairs. Reductions to the dwelling stock may occur as a result of demolitions, dwellings falling out of use, conversions which result in fewer dwellings, destruction of dwellings as a result of fires, floods and other natural disasters.

20. Ideally a system of current housing statistics provides for the regular collection of data on each of these aspects of change. In some cases, supplementary information related to the activity in question is required. This is particularly true in the case of dwelling construction. In addition to the number of dwellings constructed, it would be useful to have information on certain structural characteristics (type of dwelling, type of building, area of floor space, number of rooms) and facilities, as well as the value of the dwellings and type of investor (private, government, co-operative etc.).

21. At its twelfth session, the Statistical Commission agreed that activities designed to develop current housing statistics could be most effectively carried out at the regional and national levels and that activity at the international level should be primarily one of stimulating these activities and effecting co-ordination. Accordingly, the Commission requested the Secretary-General "to continue efforts, in collaboration with the regional economic commissions and national governments, on the development of standards for a system of current housing statistics".^{9/} Efforts have therefore been made to encourage, at the regional level, the development of recommendations which would serve as a guide to countries desirous of establishing or improving a statistical accounting system to record changes in the housing stock and related information.

22. Since the previous report to the Commission in 1965 (E/CN.3/335), a study on the collection of construction data has been issued by the Statistical Office under the title Construction Statistics.^{10/} The sections of this paper which deal with statistics of dwelling construction reflect the topics upon which information should be collected in the early stages of developing a system of current housing statistics. Proposals for international recommendations for construction statistics are included in another paper before the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/369). These recommendations, however, are concerned mainly with methods of collecting data from construction enterprises. The recommendations also provide for a system of data collection in which the construction project is used as the statistical unit. In addition to this information, a system of data collection is required which will measure the numerical changes to the housing inventory described in para. 19 above.

23. In Europe, the final version of a programme for current housing statistics^{11/} was issued during 1966. This programme, prepared jointly by the Conference of European Statisticians and the ECE Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, represents the first regional framework for the development of national systems

^{9/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 13, resolution 9 (XII), operative para. 6.

^{10/} United Nations publication, Sales No.: 66.XVII.4.

^{11/} European Programme of Current Housing Statistics (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 66.II.E/Mim. 42).

of current housing statistics. It contains recommendations with respect to the topics which should be collected together with concepts, definitions and classifications as well as sources of the data and possible methods of collection. 24. The Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI) collaborates with the United Nations in the development of housing statistics in North and South America. In 1962, the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes drew attention to the importance of establishing regional recommendations for the collection of current housing statistics and agreed upon a minimum programme which it would be desirable to incorporate into such recommendations.^{12/} The Fourth Congress of the Inter-American Construction Statistics Workshop in Lima, Peru (26-28 October 1964) agreed that a regional programme should be developed for the collection of construction statistics and proposed that the responsibility for this work should be undertaken by IASI in collaboration with the United Nations. Subsequently, the Latin American Seminar on Industrial Statistics which took place in Quito, Ecuador from 7-16 December 1966,^{13/} recommended topics to be included in a system of construction statistics for Latin America. Among the recommended topics were the number of dwellings constructed and the number of rooms; A minimum programme for the collection of current housing statistics in North and South America will be discussed at a future session of the IASI Sub-Committee on Demographic and Housing Statistics (of the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics).

25. The participants at the Asian Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes (1963) recognized the value of a current housing statistics programme. The Seminar agreed that a regional framework should be established and proposed topics to be included in a minimum programme.^{14/} In considering the report of the Seminar, the sixth session of the Conference of Asian Statisticians recommended

^{12/} Report of the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes, op. cit., para. 532.

^{13/} Report of the Latin American Seminar on Industrial Statistics, Quito, 7-16 December 1966 (E/CN.12/750).

^{14/} Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Asia and the Far East, op. cit., para. 437.

"... that a regional programme of current housing statistics be established for the ECAFE countries",^{15/} and the Conference also agreed that the topics proposed by the Seminar should comprise the minimum programme.

26. A minimum programme for the collection of current housing statistics in the African region was formulated and agreed upon by the African Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes in 1966.^{16/} It is hoped that on the basis of the conclusions of the Seminar a programme suitable for the development of current statistics in African countries might be formulated and made available in the region.

27. Thus, as of the present time, specific recommendations for a regional system of current statistics have been formulated only in Europe, although in Asia, recommendations have been made by the Conference of Asian Statisticians which could serve as a basis for a more specific programme to be made available to countries. In the Americas and in Africa, regional programmes have not yet been formulated although in both cases a tentative basis for such programmes already exists. Since information which reflects changes in the housing inventory, and particularly the volume of dwelling construction being achieved, is essential for planning and other purposes it would seem most desirable that a conceptual and methodological framework, within which current housing statistics might be developed at the national level, should be made available in those regions lacking such a framework, namely, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

D. Other methods of collection

28. With respect to methods of collection other than housing censuses, housing sample surveys and systems of current statistics (for example, multisubject household surveys, surveys on topics other than housing, housing registers), the work of the Statistical Office has been mainly one of stressing the need for proper co-ordination and consistency within an integrated system of data collection with respect to concepts, definitions, timing and geographic base. References to this

^{15/} Report of the Conference of Asian Statisticians (sixth session) to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (twenty-first session) (E/CN.11/686), para. 134 (d).

^{16/} Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Africa, op. cit., para. 371.

effect are included in the recommendations for the 1970 censuses^{17/} and, as stated above, a paper^{18/} stressing the importance of achieving and maintaining co-ordination among the numerous statistical inquiries carried out in most countries was prepared for the regional seminars on organization and conduct of population and housing censuses.

IV. STANDARDIZATION OF DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

29. The work in this area has centred mainly around the recommendations for the 1970 housing censuses and emphasis has been placed on bringing into line with these recommendations the concepts and definitions utilized in other inquiries aimed at the collection of housing statistics. It is appropriate that the census should serve as such a focal point since it is the census which provides the benchmark data necessary for the analysis, evaluation and interpretation of data collected in other inquiries dealing with or including housing topics and it is the census which frequently provides the frame for carrying out subsequent sample surveys on housing.

30. In preparing the recommendations for the 1970 censuses, concepts and definitions were reviewed with respect to national practice, the conclusions of various bodies whose work had a bearing on the development of the recommendations^{19/} and previous international recommendations. Changes in definitions and classifications which have been made as a result of this review and which are likely to have some effect on the nature and validity of the results of the 1970 housing censuses and of the results of other inquiries utilizing the same concepts and definitions are outlined below. They are dealt with under five principal headings: (a) household, (b) living quarters, (c) building, (d) characteristics and facilities of living quarters and (e) demographic and social characteristics of occupants.

^{17/} Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., paras. 24-45.

^{18/} Co-ordination between housing censuses and population censuses and of these censuses with other statistical inquiries and compilations, op. cit.

^{19/} For the groups whose work had a bearing on the development of the Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses and an account of their work, see Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes, op. cit.

A. Household

31. The concept of household is basic to the housing census since it is the household for which living quarters need to be provided and it is in relation to household size, type and composition and the characteristics of the household head that housing conditions have to be measured in order to be meaningful. Although there is no basic change in the concept of household as proposed for the 1970 censuses from that proposed for the 1960 censuses, the implications of variations in the definition have become clearer and, as a consequence there has been a tightening up of the definition.^{20/}

32. The definition is more precise than that recommended for the 1960 censuses with respect to the unit itself and also with respect to the relationship to be maintained between the concept of household and that of living quarters. For example, it became clear that if the household was to represent a meaningful economic and social unit, its members must have more in common than the fact that they occupy the same set of living quarters. The concept of household has now been firmly established, therefore, on the basis of economic and social relationships. Thus it has been recognized that, although in most cases, one household occupies a single set of living quarters, it is possible by definition and not unusual in practice, for several households to occupy the same set of living quarters or for a single household to occupy more than one set of living quarters.

33. This tightening of the definition provides for the separate identification as households of individuals or groups of individuals having socio-economic ties, occupying hotels, boarding houses and similar accommodation; previously the total number of occupants was identified simply as a collective household.^{21/}

34. The revised version of the household concept should have far-reaching implications with respect to the correct interpretation of statistical information

^{20/} For the recommended definition of "household" see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., paras. 201, 202 and Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Population Censuses (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 67.XVII.3), paras. 146, 147.

^{21/} However, households occupying housing units located within the building or within the grounds of hotels, boarding houses etc., were separately identified.

describing the housing situation and the identification of causes and effects with respect to housing conditions. In particular, the improved definition should facilitate the preparation of estimates of housing needs.

35. Recommendations aimed at the identification within households of the number of family nuclei^{22/} or the number of married couples are another significant step which enables patterns of living to be more closely observed and provides for more realistic estimates of housing needs. It also furnishes valuable insight into the possible fission of households and consequent changes in household size and composition, which may occur as a result of an increase in the supply of housing and/or improved economic conditions.

B. Living quarters

36. No major changes in the definition or classification of living quarters used for the 1960 censuses have been recommended.^{23/} The previous categories of "conventional (permanent) dwelling" and "rustic housing unit" were merged under a single title of "conventional dwelling" but, since provision was made for these merged groups to be identified as sub-groups within the main category, no real difference was effected. However, as with the concept of "household", greater emphasis was placed on the fact that the concept of living quarters should be considered independently of "household". A clearer relationship was also established with respect to the concepts of living quarters, household and building.

C. Building

37. Based on country and regional usage and the advice of experts and working groups, a definition of building was developed for the 1970 recommendations.^{24/} The concept had not previously been defined in specific terms at the international level. In so far as the information collected in housing censuses and other

^{22/} For the recommended definition of "conjugal family nucleus" see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., para. 249.

^{23/} For the recommended definition of "living quarters" see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., paras. 157-196.

^{24/} For the recommended definition of "building" see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., para. 206.

statistical inquiries refers to the building in which living quarters are located, the fact that a specific definition has been agreed upon should serve to improve the value and usefulness of the resultant information.

D. Characteristics and facilities of living quarters

38. In formulating the recommendations for the 1970 censuses, careful attention was paid to the priority which should be given to the collection of the various topics in a housing census. This resulted in greater emphasis being placed on the collection of information concerning buildings in which living quarters are located and on the kind of lighting used in living quarters. "Type of building", "construction material of outer walls" and "kind of lighting" have thus been added to the list of "recommended" topics.^{25/} The collection of data on these characteristics should provide useful information for housing programmes.

E. Demographic and social characteristics of occupants

39. The concepts, definitions and classifications of demographic and social characteristics developed for the population census have been adopted for the housing census.^{26/} However, significant improvements in housing data should result from the fact that the demographic and social topics concerning occupants which it would be most useful to relate to housing information have now been clearly specified. It has been recommended that information concerning the household head should be considered of primary importance and that the topics to be studied should include at least age, sex, type of activity and occupation. Other significant attributes proposed are industry, marital status and national and/or ethnic group. Cross-classifications of housing characteristics with these data would reveal the economic, social and ethnic groups most affected by housing inadequacies and they should provide useful information concerning the kinds of programmes best suited under various sets of circumstances for the alleviation of poor housing conditions.

^{25/} For a list of "recommended" and "other useful" topics see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., para. 239.

^{26/} For the demographic and social characteristics of occupants recommended for collection in a housing census, see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., para. 263.

V. IMPROVEMENTS IN HOUSING STATISTICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

40. Stress is usually placed upon the fact that only data which have a clearly established purpose should be collected in statistical inquiries. However, although the purpose for which the data are intended may be generally known, it sometimes occurs that the methods of employing them to maximum advantage are not well understood. There are three main areas where efforts have been made to improve housing statistics at the national level: (a) the development of tabulations for housing census information, (b) the organization of regional seminars on housing statistics and programmes and (c) the development of methods of estimating housing needs.

A. Development of tabulations for housing census data

41. In preparing the recommendations for the 1970 housing censuses, special emphasis was placed on the development of tabulations which would provide data in its most useful form for specific purposes consistent with the collection of a minimum number of topics and limited classification of these topics.^{27/} A description of the purposes which each tabulation is intended to serve was prepared and included as part of the recommendations. Specific references are made to their practical application in measuring the housing component of levels of living, estimating housing needs, revealing the underlying causes of need, indicating the extent to which the population may be expected to contribute to the satisfaction of its own needs, estimating the rates of construction being attained and the investment being devoted to housing. It is hoped that this material will not only be useful in preparing tabulation programmes for national housing censuses but that it may also serve a useful purpose for planning other statistical inquiries.

B. Organization of regional seminars on housing statistics and programmes

42. The Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Africa^{28/} which took place in Denmark during 1966 marked the fourth in a series of regional seminars organized by the Statistical Office in collaboration with the Centre for Housing,

^{27/} For the tabulations recommended to be prepared in a housing census, see Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses, op. cit., part VI.

^{28/} Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Africa, op. cit.

Building and Planning, the respective regional commissions and the Government of Denmark. Previous seminars in this series were held for Europe (1961),^{29/} Latin America (1962),^{30/} Asia and the Far East (1963).^{31/} The seminars were organized for the benefit of participants from housing agencies and statistical offices in developing countries of the regions covered. The purpose was to analyse the successive steps involved in the preparation of housing programmes and to arrive at some conclusions concerning the statistical data most urgently required for the planning process and the best methods of obtaining them. It is hoped that, as a result of the seminars, planners may have a better idea of the possibilities and opportunities as well as the limitations with respect to the statistical tools at their disposal and that statisticians may have a clearer understanding of the statistical requirements for planning purposes. A fifth in the series of seminars, this time for developing countries in Europe and the Middle East, is scheduled to take place in 1969.

43. In connexion with the seminars on housing statistics and programmes described above (which were financed mainly from the Danish special contribution to technical assistance funds), it is pertinent to note that a follow-up mission was recently organized by the Danish Government and the United Nations to evaluate seminars for the ECAFE region financed under the Danish programme of technical assistance. In its report, the mission observed, inter alia, that: "(a) Out of seventy participants of the four seminars financed under the Danish Special Contribution in the last ten years, all, except for three persons, were still serving in the general housing field; (b) In every country visited, some of the highest posts in the field of housing were held by persons who had participated in the seminars; (c) Most of the participants had left their countries for the first time to order to attend these seminars; and each of them called the experience 'an eye-opener'. The interdisciplinary approach adopted at the seminars and the observations that had

^{29/} Report on the Seminar on Housing Surveys and Programmes with particular reference to problems in the developing countries (United Nations publication Sales No.: 62.II.E/Mim.8).

^{30/} Report of the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes, op. cit.

^{31/} Report of the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes for Asia and the Far East, op. cit.

impressed them upon seeing this approach in action in the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere were invariably mentioned by the participants; (d) On the basis of their experiences, most participants had tried to put new ideas and techniques to work in their own countries, with varying success according to the conditions prevailing in the country concerned...".

44. The report goes on to state that "while there was a feeling that the seminars were useful and that they be continued, the Mission noted that they offered opportunities of which proper advantage was not being taken. The main drawback, according to the mission, was that the seminars were regarded as isolated events and it was urged that they be conceived, implemented and followed up as part of a system, a continuous process of exchange of information and training".^{32/}

45. Tentative proposals for a second series of seminars to begin in 1971 have been discussed with the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning. It has been suggested that, to meet the needs of developing countries, many of which are experiencing a massive population influx to urban areas, and also to match the increased emphasis in these countries on planning for development, this second round of seminars might need to be broader in scope than the first. They might include, not only the formulation of national housing programmes and the statistics required, but also the main aspects to be considered in formulating urban and metropolitan plans and the data required as a basis for the many decisions which have to be taken in this connexion.

C. Methods of estimating housing needs

46. At its twelfth session the Statistical Commission had before it a report^{33/} on a preliminary note entitled Proposed Methods of Estimating Housing Needs,^{34/} a report which had been prepared on the basis of comments received from regional groups concerned with housing statistics, statistical offices and housing agencies.

^{32/} Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning: Follow-up mission to Danish Housing Seminars in the ECAFE region (E/C.6/64/Add.1), paras. 3, 4.

^{33/} Progress Report on Development of Statistics for Social Programmes (E/CN.3/296), paras. 32-39.

^{34/} E/CN.3/274.

After considering this report, the Commission requested the Secretary-General "in consultation with regional groups and taking account of the comments received from the members of the Statistical Commission and other bodies, to revise the document on proposed methods of estimating housing needs, and to issue it as a provisional technical study to stimulate national and regional research on this subject".^{35/}

47. In compliance with this request, the preliminary note was revised to take into account the comments already received and circulated in revised form for further comments to the regional commissions and to the Inter American Statistical Institute.

48. A further opportunity to reflect regional viewpoints was afforded by the fact that while the work on the study was proceeding, methods of estimating housing needs were considered by the four regional seminars on housing statistics and programmes referred to in para. 42 above.

49. The study which has emerged as a result of the action outlined is based, therefore, on research into national practices carried out by the Secretariat, the views of national statistical offices and housing agencies, the results of studies pursued at the regional level and the conclusions of regional seminars.

50. Since it was considered desirable that the concepts and definitions, as well as the terminology, used in the study on housing needs should be in conformity with those employed in Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses,^{36/} publication of the former was delayed pending finalization of the latter.

51. The English version of the study was issued in May 1967 as a technical manual entitled Methods of Estimating Housing Needs.^{37/} The Spanish and French versions were scheduled so as to follow the issuance of the Principles and Recommendations in these languages in order to conform the translations. The Spanish translation of the manual has been completed and is expected to be issued very shortly; it will be translated into French as soon as the French translation of the Principles and Recommendations is completed.

^{35/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 13, resolution 9 (XII).

^{36/} Op. cit.

^{37/} United Nations publication, Sales No.: 67.XVII.15.

VI. COLLECTION, STORAGE, RETRIEVAL AND DISSEMINATION OF
HOUSING STATISTICS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

A. Collection

52. Collection of housing statistics from Governments is carried out by annual questionnaires and by searching of official literature. The collection programme was expanded in 1964 to include the collection of information on estimates of housing needs. At that time available data which had been gathered from various sources by the Statistical Office were submitted to countries for verification and/or correction and, where no information was available, countries were requested to furnish whatever estimates they might have.

B. Storage

53. Since 1962 official housing statistics for every country and territory in which a housing census or survey has been carried out have been transcribed manually from their source to data cards which are then filed according to subject-matter. It is planned that computerization of these files will begin in 1969.

C. Dissemination

54. Housing statistics are published annually in the United Nations Statistical Yearbook. Until the 1965 issue of the Yearbook, the data included information on the number of dwellings together with data on their size (average number of rooms), density of occupation (number of persons per room) and facilities (piped water, gas, electricity and toilet). With the 1965 issue of the Yearbook a new table was included, showing for each country the number of dwellings constructed by size (number of rooms) and type of investor (government and private, with sub-groups); the 1966 issue included a third table, showing the number and average size of households for each country for which information was available.

55. There has been a marked increase in the number of countries for which data are shown in the Yearbook. In 1956, for example, data for only forty-eight countries were available for publication, whereas the 1966 Yearbook includes data for 130 countries.

56. The second (1967) issue of the Compendium of Social Statistics (in press) includes tables on the percentage distribution of housing units by type for each country, the proportion of population living in each type of housing unit, the

extent to which the stock of dwellings in each country is lacking in basic sanitary facilities (piped water and toilets) and the level of occupancy in dwellings as reflected by: (a) the number of occupied dwellings in relation to the number of households; (b) the average number of persons in households and the average number of rooms in occupied dwellings; (c) the average number of persons per room in occupied dwellings; and (d) the percentage of dwellings with three or more persons per room.

57. Future plans call for the computerization of housing statistics in such a way as to arrange for retrieval as manuscript for publication, and in other forms which would facilitate wider and more rapid dissemination. It is also proposed to publish a periodic volume of housing statistics showing results of housing censuses and surveys as well as current statistics in greater detail than is possible in the Yearbook.

58. It is hoped to publish periodically a bibliography of national sources of housing statistics, utilizing the facilities of the United Nations International Computing Centre. Data for such a bibliography are being collected on a continuing basis.

VII. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

59. The provision of advice and assistance in giving effect to existing standards or guiding principles for the improvement of housing statistics at the national and international levels was included, inter alia, in its work programme as a continuing project of high priority by the Statistical Commission at its thirteenth session.^{38/} With respect to housing censuses, the Economic and Social Council resolution on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes requested the Secretary-General to "give assistance under the technical co-operation programme to countries which require technical advice and help in the conduct of their censuses".^{39/} The assistance provided is taking various forms including (a) organization of regional meetings and seminars for exchange of information,

^{38/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13, para. 176 (8).

^{39/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 1, resolution 1054 B.

(b) provision of advisory services and experts and (c) assistance in connexion with training activities. Activities in these areas are carried out concomitantly with the corresponding activities for population censuses and demographic statistics described respectively in Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes,^{40/} and Progress Report on Improvement in Demographic Statistics.^{41/} They are, therefore, dealt with only briefly in this paper.

A. Organization of regional meetings and seminars for exchange of information

60. The series of regional seminars on housing statistics and programmes represents an important aspect of assistance activities with respect to the improvement of housing statistics. Since, at these seminars, emphasis was on the use of statistics at the national level they are described in part V (paras. 42-44).

61. The seminars on organization and conduct of population and housing censuses being convened for each region as a prelude to the 1970 censuses should make a significant contribution to the improvement of housing statistics. Seminars for Europe and for Asia and the Far East have already taken place and two others are planned for Africa and the Americas respectively. A seminar on sampling in population and housing censuses is scheduled to take place in Africa during 1968 and one on statistical cartography is also being planned. These seminars should contribute substantially to the improvement of the data collected in housing censuses and to housing statistics in general.

B. Advisory services and experts

(i) Interregional advisers

62. The interregional adviser on demographic statistics, whose duties are described in the Progress Report on Improvement in Demographic Statistics (E/CN.3/377, para. 62), is also responsible for advising on housing statistics. The interregional adviser on computer methods (see para. 63 of E/CN.3/377) is similarly responsible for assisting countries in connexion with the computerization of housing statistics.

^{40/} Op. cit.

^{41/} E/CN.3/377.

(ii) Regional advisers

63. Reliance has generally been placed on experts on demographic and social statistics to provide advisory services on housing statistics and up to a point this system has proved to be satisfactory. However, as the need for improved housing statistics has become more apparent, it seems that greater emphasis may have to be placed on the qualifications of regional and country experts with respect to housing statistics in order to obtain the desired improvements in these data. Furthermore, since countries are being urged to carry out housing censuses and the United Nations recommendations for the 1970 housing censuses contain a substantial number of topics and tabulations, implying an equally substantial investment of scarce resources by countries, it seems appropriate that expanded advisory services and expert assistance should be provided to ensure the proper implementation of the recommendations.

(iii) Training activities

64. The training activities in connexion with housing statistics are concentrated on the arrangements made for carrying out the 1970 housing censuses (described in E/CN.3/378).

65. Ad hoc arrangements for training in housing statistics have, so far, included courses in housing programming offered at the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Development (2 May-22 July 1966) and the series of seminars on housing statistics and programmes mentioned in paras. 42-44 above.
