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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE EIGHTEENTH  
SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

(To be held at Geneva, 7 to 18 October 1974)

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes
  - (a) Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination
  - (b) International statistical programmes, 1975-1979
  - (c) Review of electronic data processing of economic and social statistics
4. Statistics of the developing countries in the Second United Nations Development Decade
  - (a) International technical assistance in statistics, 1975-1979
  - (b) African Census Programme
  - (c) Development programme for statistics
5. System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS)
  - (a) Potential uses and usefulness
  - (b) Draft guidelines on social indicators
  - (c) Character of a system for developing countries
6. Statistics of the environment

7. Draft international recommendations on statistics of the distributive trades and services
8. International trade reconciliation study
9. Review of the recurrent publications of the Statistical Office of the United Nations
10. Statistical classifications
  - (a) Draft Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Rev. 2
  - (b) Draft International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS)
  - (c) Draft International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)
11. System of National Accounts (SNA)
  - (a) Supplementing the ~~SNA~~ <sup>national accounts</sup> for purposes of welfare measurement
  - (b) Draft international guidelines on the national and sector balance-sheet and ~~revaluation~~ <sup>revaluation</sup> accounts of the SNA
12. Statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation; draft guidelines for the developing countries
13. Programme objectives: implementation and prospects
  - (a) Statistical Office of the United Nations
  - (b) Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies
  - (c) Statistical work of the specialized agencies

14. Other business

15. Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council

*76*  
*Consideration of the for*  
*\* Draft prov. agenda of the 19th session*  
*of the Commission*

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION

1. Election of officers

A chairman, two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur will be elected to serve from the beginning of the eighteenth session to the beginning of the nineteenth session of the Commission.

2. Adoption of the agenda

*E/CN.3/441*

The Commission may wish to modify the provisional agenda and to consider the sequence in which the items on the agenda should be discussed.

3. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes

(a) Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination

Pursuant to Commission resolution 1 (XVI) and Economic and Social Council resolution 1306 (XLIV), the Commission's Working Group held its fifth session at Geneva from 2 to 4 July 1973. The report of the session (E/CN.3/442), setting out views on a wide range of items within the Working Group's terms of reference, will be before the Commission.

*E/CN.3/443 cancelled  
(6th session)*

(b) International statistical programmes, 1975-1979

At its seventeenth session, the Commission requested 1/ the preparation of a five-year programme of international statistics. A document entitled "International statistical programmes, 1975-1979" (E/CN.3/444) will be before the Commission as a joint report of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and selected non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. It will set out the major international statistical programmes for the five-year period 1975-1979, organized according to six main statistical policy objectives. The Commission may wish to approve the main objectives and comment on the broad trends in international statistical programmes for the period under review.

(c) Review of electronic data processing of economic and social statistics

At its seventeenth session, the Commission recommended 2/ that a review of electronic data processing of economic and social statistics in the United Nations be undertaken with a view to further discussion at the eighteenth session. This review (E/CN.3/445) will be before the Commission, which may wish to approve or modify the arrangements proposed.

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2, para. 22 (b).

2/ Ibid., para. 42 (a).

4. Statistics of the developing countries in the Second United Nations Development Decade

(a) International technical assistance in statistics, 1975-1979

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1566 (L), a document entitled "International technical assistance in statistics, 1975-1979" (E/CN.3/446) will be before the Commission as a joint report of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and selected non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. It will deal with a scheme of technical assistance to developing countries for the five-year period 1975-1979, organized by major types of activities. The Commission may wish to comment on the trends in technical assistance, suggest where changes should be made and make recommendations concerning long-term technical assistance planning.

(b) African Census Programme

The African Census Programme is a co-operative effort to make it possible for all African countries to take part in the 1970 round of population censuses and to provide a cadre of experienced technicians within each country capable of planning and conducting future demographic inquiries. A document entitled "African Census Programme" (E/CN.3/447) will be before the Commission, detailing the purposes of the Programme, its development and implementation by the United Nations, country participation, topics to be covered and the methodology employed in the various participating countries. The censuses taken under this Programme may be considered the forerunners of the 1980 round of censuses. Experience gained will be used in the preparation of recommendations for the 1980 population census. The Commission may wish to comment on various aspects of this Programme.

(c) Development programme for statistics

At its seventeenth session, the Commission assigned high priority to the development of guidelines for statistics for reviewing and appraising progress towards the goals of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. <sup>3/</sup> In the light of the Commission's discussion and of subsequent events, it became clear that in order to be most useful to the developing countries, the guidelines should focus major attention on the development of basic economic and social statistics rather than on the construction of indicators. Plans, therefore, are under way for up-dating and extending the scope of the publication Statistical Series for the Use of Less Developed Countries in Programmes of Economic and Social Development (Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 31). The document before the Commission (E/CN.3/448), based on detailed comments of various organizations and regional conferences of statisticians of the developing regions, contains a complete outline of the text of the revised publication and a draft annex on the basic and analytical statistics suggested.

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<sup>3/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2, para. 53 (a).

The Commission may wish to approve or modify the outline and draft annex with a view towards issuing the publication.

5. System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS)

(a) Potential uses and usefulness

At its second session (April 1973), the Expert Group on a System of Social and Demographic Statistics (ST/STAT.69, para. 62) agreed that a study on the extent to which SSDS can provide the kinds of data needed for national policy purposes should be submitted to the Commission at its eighteenth session. A document (E/CN.3/449) will be before the Commission, analysing the usefulness of the present version of SSDS for national policy purposes and, in a more limited fashion, appraising its feasibility in the light of the type of data required for its implementation. The present version of SSDS, which is designed to provide a framework for the development of integrated and linked social, demographic and related economic statistics, is described in "Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics" (ST/STAT.68), published in 1973 in preliminary form. A revision will be published in 1974. The Commission may wish to consider whether E/CN.3/449 should be distributed to national statistical offices for comment.

(b) Draft guidelines on social indicators

At its seventeenth session, the Commission assigned high priority to the delineation of social indicators within the framework of SSDS. <sup>4/</sup> A document (E/CN.3/450) will be before the Commission, containing final draft guidelines on social indicators, dealing with the purposes, concepts, place in the system, criteria of selection and methods of construction, and listing the series of social indicators themselves. The Commission may wish to approve or modify the indicators and propose what further action should be undertaken.

(c) Character of a system for developing countries

At its seventeenth session, the Commission requested the preparation of a progress report <sup>4/</sup> on a draft version of SSDS suitable for use by the developing countries. The report will be before the Commission (E/CN.3/451), which may wish to comment on the proposals made and suggest further action.

6. Statistics of the environment

At its seventeenth session, the Commission requested the preparation of a study on the requirements for, and character of, statistics of the environment. <sup>5/</sup> A study outlining the requirements for, and a programme of work on, international environmental statistics will be before the Commission (E/CN.3/452) for comment.

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<sup>4/</sup> Ibid., para. 117.

<sup>5/</sup> Ibid., para. 194 (e).

7. Draft international recommendations on statistics of the distributive trades and services

At its seventeenth session, the Commission discussed a draft revision of the 1958 publication International Recommendations in Statistics of Distribution (Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 26) and requested that a further draft revision be submitted at the eighteenth session, 6/ based on comments of the Commission and of national statistical offices "Draft international recommendations on statistics of the distributive trades and services" (E/CN.3/453) will be before the Commission, which may wish to adopt or modify the recommendations.

8. International trade reconciliation study

A report on a reconciliation study of international trade statistics was discussed by the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its fifth session. The Working Group agreed that the report, amended in the light of the discussion, should be submitted to the Commission (E/CN.3/442, para. 62). The amended report (E/CN.3/454) will be before the Commission, which may wish to advise whether the project described - which would require countries to analyse their trade figures in relation to the reporting of the same trade by their partner countries - should be launched and the steps that may be required to improve the comparability of the data.

9. Review of the recurrent publications of the Statistical Office of the United Nations

At its seventeenth session, the Commission agreed that a review of recurrent statistical publications, as suggested by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/8362), should be undertaken from time to time. 7/ A document (E/CN.3/455) reviewing the recurrent publications of the Statistical Office will be before the Commission. It will outline the content, timeliness and methods of data collection and compilation of the publications of the Statistical Office and propose changes with a view to their improvement. The Commission may wish to comment on the proposals.

10. Statistical classifications

(a) Draft Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Rev. 2

The final text of the "Draft Standard International Trade Classification, Rev. 2" (E/CN.3/456) will be before the Commission, based on the recommendations of the Commission, 8/ on the conclusions of an expert group, on the comments of Governments and international organizations, on various studies by the Statistical

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6/ Ibid., para. 109.

7/ Ibid., para. 174.

8/ Ibid., para. 99.

Office of problem areas in SITC, and on the work done on the correlation of SITC, Rev. 2, and the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature (BTN) by the Working Party established by the Nomenclature Committee of the Customs Co-operation Council. The general framework of the second revision was approved by the Commission at its seventeenth session. The Commission may wish to approve the final text of SITC, Rev. 2.

(b) Draft International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS)

At its seventeenth session, the Commission requested that a draft classification of all goods and services be submitted at its eighteenth session. 9/ Efforts are being made to complete the "Draft International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS)" (E/CN.3/457) for the Commission. ICGS is a derived classification. The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) defines the industries to which commodities and services are classified, and the Standard International Trade Classification, Revised (SITC) delineates categories of goods (but not services), usually in sufficient detail to be adaptable to the criteria of ICGS. As an over-all guide for dissecting the service industries of ISIC, the purpose classification of the System of National Accounts (SNA) was adopted. The Commission may wish to discuss and comment on the structure and general principles of ICGS.

(c) Draft International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

At its seventeenth session, the Commission agreed to include UNESCO's ISCED as an item on the agenda of the eighteenth session. 10/ The Commission will have before it a draft final version of ISCED with a short covering note (E/CN.3/458), asking that the Commission examine ISCED with a view to ensuring co-ordination with related statistical classifications and programmes within the United Nations system. ISCED will be submitted to a UNESCO meeting in December 1974 for final action.

11. System of National Accounts (SNA)

(a) Supplementing the ~~SNA~~ <sup>national accounts</sup> for purposes of welfare measurement

Although the limitations of conventional measures of gross domestic product (GDP) for welfare comparisons are well known, they are nevertheless used for such comparisons. As conventionally measured, the GDP includes items which are "regrettable necessities" (for example, expenditures for travel to and from work and military expenditures) and which do not necessarily contribute to welfare as usually understood. Moreover, no allowance, or inadequate allowance, is made for the negative effects of production, particularly environmental pollution. At the same time, the GDP excludes certain elements which contribute to welfare, ranging from the domestic services provided by housewives to the utilization of leisure

9/ Ibid., para. 195 (i).

10/ Ibid., para. 22 (j).

time. The limitations of the GDP are particularly serious when comparisons are made between growth rates of developed and developing economies.

At its ninth session, the Committee for Development Planning reviewed various suggestions for developing welfare-oriented measures of output and hoped that the suggestions would be pursued by the appropriate bodies, especially the Statistical Commission. 11/ A document (E/CN.3/459) before the Commission will analyse the deficiencies of the conventional GDP for welfare comparisons, especially international comparisons, and discuss supplementary approaches to measuring welfare - probably within the context of SNA, the evolving System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS) and work to be done on environmental pollution.

(b) Draft international guidelines on the national and sector balance-sheet and revaluation accounts of the SNA

At its seventeenth session, the Commission requested the development (in co-operation with the International Monetary Fund) of draft international guidelines on the definitions, classifications and standard accounts and tables of the national and sector balance-sheet and revaluation accounts of the SNA. 12/ These draft guidelines will be before the Commission (E/CN.3/460) for adoption, modified in the light of the Commission's comments. In addition, a supplementary information document on the relationships between balance-sheets in the System of Material Product Balances (MPS) and proposed balance-sheets of the SNA will be before the Commission (E/CN.3/461).

12. Statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation; draft guidelines for the developing countries

At its seventeenth session, the Commission adopted a full system of statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation - linked to the System of National Accounts (SNA) and to the Material Product System (MPS). It recommended 13/ that draft guidelines be prepared for the use of the developing countries. A proposal for a simplified system, adapted to the circumstances of the developing countries, will be before the Commission (E/CN.3/462). The Commission may wish to indicate whether it considers the simplified system suitable for the developing countries.

13. Programme objectives: implementation and prospects

(a) Statistical Office of the United Nations

Pursuant to a request of the Commission at its seventeenth session, 14/ a

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11/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 5, para. 17.

12/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2, para. 195 (c).

13/ Ibid., para. 85.

14/ Ibid., para. 142.



report (E/CN.3/463) will be before it summarizing the progress of the work of the Statistical Office since the seventeenth session. It will deal with the implementation and prospects of the work programme of the Office. The Commission may wish to comment on the report. The progress of work on statistics of prices and quantities will be before the Commission in two supplementary information documents - one on ~~national~~ practices in national accounting in constant prices (E/CN.3/464), and the other on ~~national~~ practices in index numbers of prices and quantities (E/CN.3/465)

(b) Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies

A progress report (E/CN.3/466) will be before it summarizing the statistical work of the regional economic commissions and of the Inter-American Statistical Institute since the seventeenth session of the Commission.

(c) Statistical work of the specialized agencies

Pursuant to a request of the Commission at its seventeenth session, 15/ a progress report (E/CN.3/467) will be before it summarizing the statistical work of the specialized agencies since the seventeenth session.

14. Other business

The Commission may wish to discuss matters not covered under other items of the agenda.

15. +  
16 - 15. Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council

E/CN.3/L.76  
+ ARB.19

The report of the Commission on its eighteenth session will be prepared by the Rapporteur, with the assistance of the Secretariat. If necessary, a separate document on the financial implications of the Commission's recommendations will be prepared by the Secretary-General.

*inf. included in individual files (for lobby)*

L 77 - draft  
L 78 - ibid.  
L 79 - draft  
1972  
1973

15/ Ibid., para. 141.