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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS

REGIONAL CONFERENCES OF STATISTICIANS AND SIMILAR BODIES

Report by the Secretary-General*

SUMMARY

The present document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the statistical activities of the regional commissions and the Inter-American Statistical Institute since the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission, in October 1974. It covers the work of the Economic Commission for Europe (paras. 2-19), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (paras. 20-45), the Economic Commission for Africa (paras. 46-68) and the Inter-American Statistical Institute (paras. 69-85).

* The Secretary-General wishes to thank the Inter-American Statistical Institute for its contribution to this report.

1. At its eighteenth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General entitled "Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies" (E/CN.3/466). 1/ The present document is the corresponding report on statistical work done since the eighteenth session. A progress report on the statistical work of the specialized agencies (E/CN.3/497) and a report on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations (E/CN.3/498) are also before the Commission.

I. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE)

A. Conference of European Statisticians

2. The Conference held its twenty-third session in June 1975 (ECE/CES/6) and the twenty-fourth session is scheduled for June 1976. The main developments in the Conference's work during the programme years 1974/75 and 1975/76 are described below.

1. Economic statistics

3. The Conference continued to co-operate in the work of the Statistical Commission on the extension and further development of the systems of national accounts and balances. A meeting was held on price measurement in external trade and meetings on public sector statistics and on statistics of producer prices will be held in July 1976. Work continued on an international comparison of relative income difference within the population, which is being carried out jointly by eight countries, and the final report on this work is expected to be available during 1976. The Conference continued work on a study of the use of national accounts and balances for the co-ordination of economic statistics. A meeting is planned for 1976/77 to review the implementation and possible further development of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS).

4. A second meeting on the International Standard Classification of all Goods and Services (ICGS) was held, and the relevant parts of the classification are being submitted to expert groups on particular parts, for their comments. Work continued on the preparation of a conversion key between the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and the Standard Foreign Trade Classification (SFTC) of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

5. The Conference continued to co-operate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Committee on Agricultural Problems of ECE in developing agricultural statistics. A meeting was held on the programme for the 1980 World Census of Agriculture. Work continued on a European handbook

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5603 and Corr.1), paras. 157-167.

of economic accounts for agriculture. Preparations were made for a meeting on food consumption surveys in 1976/77.

6. The Conference continued to co-operate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the senior advisers to ECE Governments on science and technology. A seminar on this subject was held at Prague in January 1976.

7. Work also continued on statistics of energy, chemicals, tourism and fixed capital formation, stocks and profits.

2. Social and demographic statistics

8. The Conference continued to participate in the development of a System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS). At its fifth session, in April 1975, the Working Party on this subject gave further consideration to the common concepts, definitions and classifications of the system. Groups of rapporteurs are working on links among the subsystems of SSDS, links between SSDS and the systems of national accounts and balances, and the elaboration of the active sequence. The sixth session of the Working Party will be held in May 1976 to study, inter alia, the revised version of the draft international guidelines on social indicators (E/CN.3/438), in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission. 2/

9. The Conference continued to co-operate with the World Health Organization (WHO) on health statistics, with UNESCO on statistics of education and of culture and with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on manpower statistics. A meeting was held jointly with UNESCO on statistics of culture, in September 1974, and another meeting jointly with UNESCO on statistics of education will be held in April 1976. The Conference also co-operates with the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning of ECE in the development of housing statistics; a joint meeting will be held in August 1976.

10. In the demographic field, a meeting was held on migration statistics and a second meeting on fertility surveys (the latter in co-operation with the International Statistical Institute and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population in support of the World Fertility Survey). Preparations were made for the elaboration of a European programme for the 1980 population and housing censuses (within the framework of the world programme in this field).

3. Other statistical subjects

11. At its twenty-third session, the Conference considered statistics of regions within countries, on the basis of papers prepared by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and several other countries, and will take up the subject again at its twenty-fourth session.

2/ Ibid., para. 80 (a) and (e).

12. The Conference has undertaken a study on the measurement and presentation of the degree of accuracy of statistics and on methods of improving accuracy including the use of statistical methods in the production of statistics. These questions were discussed at the twenty-third plenary session and will be considered again at the twenty-fourth session.

4. Organizational and operational subjects

13. The Working Party on Electronic Data Processing met in March 1976 and discussed, as main subjects, data base management, computing in national statistical services after 1980, integrated statistical information systems, automated system of state statistics and automated editing and imputation of statistical data bases. Further work on data base management was carried on by a group of rapporteurs. The Conference also agreed to co-operate in the Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS) seminars conducted by the Computing Research Centre at Bratislava.

B. Statistical work of the principal subsidiary bodies of ECE

14. The Group of Experts on Transport Statistics of the Inland Transport Committee of ECE met in January 1975. The main subjects discussed were price and quantity indices in transport; ICGS relating to transport equipment and services; Annual Bulletin of Transport Statistics for Europe; energy and environmental statistics related to transport; terms and definitions of transport statistics; censuses of road traffic on main international traffic arteries; and statistics of road traffic accidents.

Forest Products

corr. 15. The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on ~~Forest Economics~~ and ^{Statistics} of the Timber Committee of ECE and the European Forestry Commission of FAO met in April 1975. The main subjects discussed were cash and price statistics, conversion factors, removal statistics, forest resource appraisal and wood supply forecasting, environmental benefits of forestry, classification and definitions of forest products, labour statistics and title and terms of reference of the Working Party.

16. The Group of Experts on Coal Statistics of the Coal Committee of ECE held its session in June 1975. The main subjects discussed were decisions of the Coal Committee concerning the Group of Experts' work, statistical bulletins and other activities in the field of energy statistics, internationally comparable measurements of productivity, productivity forecasts, statistical methods of recording and analysing the working time at mechanized coal faces, capital formation and costs of production, methods of analysing accident statistics in the coal mining industries and principles of presenting statistics of high output.

corr. 17. The Group of Experts on Gas Statistics of the Committee on Gas of ECE met in September 1975. The Group of Experts considered, inter alia, the activities of the Sub-Committee on Statistics ~~and on units of the International System of Gas Union~~, statistical information published periodically, questions arising from the gradual transition to the International System of Units, collection of statistical information on underground gas storage facilities, international comparison of

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ratios within the gas industry, harmonization of questionnaires on gas statistics, technical problems related to the "over-all balance sheets of energy" and use of computers in forecasting gas demands.

18. All other statistical meetings under the programmes of the principal subsidiary bodies of ECE were convened jointly with the Conference of European Statisticians and have already been mentioned above.

19. During the period under review, statistical issues were also considered directly by other principal subsidiary bodies of ECE, namely, by the Steel Committee, the Committee on Electric Power, the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, the Ad Hoc Meeting of Experts on Engineering Industries and the Working Party on Automation. These bodies were informed of the relevant statistical work of the Conference and the ECE secretariat, including the preparation of the corresponding statistical publications of ECE.

II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

20. During the period under review, statistical activities in the ESCAP region were geared to contemporary needs and developments in economic, social and demographic statistics. However, for lack of financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and developed countries, a number of technical meetings have had to be either cancelled, rescheduled or postponed indefinitely.

A. Statistical collection, compilation and analysis

21. The Statistics Division continued the project begun in 1972 on the collection of census data or demographic surveys of countries of the ESCAP region. Those countries which took part in the 1970 World Programme of Population Censuses were requested to provide a copy of a one-in-a-hundred sample file of households, on magnetic tape, for research purposes. So far, eight data sets covering seven countries of the region have been acquired. It is planned that in preparation for the 1980 World Programme of Population Censuses, requests will be made to countries well before the census, thus leaving adequate time for including the generation of sample data by computer as an integral part of their census.

22. With regard to regular collection and dissemination of regional information, the following publications were issued:

23. Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, 1973 and 1974 issues; 1975 issue is in press. A Supplement, containing a description of the series included in the Yearbook, will be issued in 1976.

24. Quarterly Bulletins of Statistics for Asia and the Pacific were issued regularly. Special feature articles were "Data bases for statistical systems" (June 1973); "International recommendations and implementation problem: civil registration and sample registration" (September 1973); "Review of the input-output

tables compiled in the Philippines" (December 1973); "Statistics for environmental studies and policies" (March 1974); "System of social and demographic statistics" (June 1974); and "Population change and development problems of the ESCAP region" (September 1974).

25. Statistical Indicators in ESCAP Countries. The coverage and content are continually enlarged in this quarterly publication.

26. Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific, 1970, and parts of 1971 and 1972 (published in sections as data from countries become available).

27. Statistical Newsletter. Issues for 1975 were, for various reasons, combined for March and June, and September and December. Quarterly periodicity will be resumed in 1976.

28. Handbook on Cereal and Fertilizer Statistics of ESCAP Countries. Ad hoc publication issued in 1975.

29. Report on Sample Surveys in ESCAP Region. Eleventh and twelfth annual issues, pertaining to 1973 and 1974, were released. The twelfth report includes particulars of 97 large-scale sample surveys conducted in 20 countries and a listing of 125 repetitive surveys, the details of which were given in earlier reports.

B. Statistical methods and standards

30. Evaluative methodological studies on compilation of national accounts and input-output tables were undertaken for a number of countries of the region. With the appointment of an adviser on social statistics at the beginning of March 1976, methodological studies will be undertaken for developing series on social statistics and social indicators. A regional programme of vital statistics will commence during the second half of 1976, in which a regional adviser on vital statistics will study the civil registration systems in the countries of the region and advise them on the improvement of administration, coverage, compilation of data on vital events and their analysis. Vital statistics surveys will also be studied and improvements suggested.

31. The study on commodity balances in six countries of the region, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand, a joint project of ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank, FAO and the Institute for Developing Economies (Tokyo) continued and is expected to be completed by March 1977.

32. A joint ESCAP/IBRD project on household survey data on income distribution was initiated in 1975. The project aims at an assessment and analysis of household surveys in the developing countries of Asia, which include information on income or expenditure as well as employment and other socio-economic characteristics. For selected developing countries, profiles will be prepared of different income groups, which can provide an empirical basis for formulating appropriate planning strategies.

C. Statistics development

33. During the period under review, the first session of the Committee on Statistics, the successor to the Conference of Asian Statisticians, was held at Jakarta, Indonesia, in November 1974. The Committee reviewed the statistics development activities in the countries of the ESCAP region, the activities of ESCAP secretariat in the development of statistics and the work of the Asian Statistical Institute. It recognized the need for data on energy, environment and culture and considered methods and frameworks for developing them. The Committee also considered the reports of the Workshop on Census Tabulation Using COCENTS System and of the Working Group on Manpower and Labour Statistics. The COCENTS system for the tabulation of data from censuses and surveys has now been installed in a number of countries in the region and some of them will be using it to process censuses conducted during 1976. With regard to manpower and labour statistics, the Committee concurred with the views of the Working Group regarding the in-depth analysis and use of population census data and supplementing them with data from labour force surveys, and the need for measuring employment, unemployment and under-employment more adequately.

34. In reviewing the implementation of a proposed scheme (known as the "L.2 scheme") for collecting economic statistics of shipping, the Committee stressed that the scheme was the best way of obtaining the required statistics at reasonable cost, and recommended that it remain one of the priority components of the ESCAP work programme. In November 1975, a task force visited a selected number of countries in the region to study the problems of implementation of the L.2 scheme.

35. The Committee also considered the ESCAP programme of activities in statistics and, in the light of the changing world situation and consequent importance of certain topics, suggested a schedule of technical meetings. The Committee considered these meetings highly important in promoting statistics development and suggested intensification of efforts to secure funds needed to organize them.

36. A Working Group on Current Demographic Statistics was organized in June 1975 at Bangkok. The Group reviewed the state of demographic statistics in the countries of the region and emphasized the need for improving the civil registration system. It also stressed that sample registration systems and other types of vital statistics surveys had a definite role to play in improving the quality and timeliness of vital statistics. The Group also considered the demographic subsystem of the System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS) and recommended that a simplified adaptation of the system be prepared, appropriate to the stage of statistical development in the countries of the region. On the subject of social indicators the Group felt that there was a need for preparing and circulating a methodological note for preparing these indicators and that the indicators should be at national as well as regional levels.

37. A Working Group of Statistical Experts, recommended by the Committee on Statistics, met at Bangkok in October 1975. It reviewed the statistical development activities of the countries of the region as well as the secretariat and noted the

financial constraints faced by ESCAP which resulted in its difficulties in convening technical meetings desired by countries of the region. It emphasized the need for seeking funds from various sources.

D. Statistical training

38. The Asian Statistical Institute (Tokyo) entered its second phase (1975-1979) in October 1975 and started its sixth general course in November. Earlier it successfully conducted the fourth and fifth general courses and two advanced courses. In addition, it conducted country courses in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

39. For the second phase, the duration of the general courses has been reduced from 10 to 6 months. This was primarily to allow for more advanced courses of six weeks' duration to be organized on topics of contemporary interest, and also for more country courses. Thus, two advanced courses have been planned for the year 1975-76. Negotiations are also in progress to conduct two country courses during the period.

40. With financial assistance from the Government of France, the training centre for French-speaking countries continued to function in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, but participants at the centre were only from that country during the last year or so.

41. Countries of the region continued to avail themselves of the facilities provided under the ESCAP Netherlands Fellowship Programme. Under this scheme, fellowships which include travel costs and living expenses, are awarded to nationals in one country for training in another country within the region for a period which normally does not exceed six months.

E. Advisory services

42. The regional adviser on national accounts, financed by UNDP, continued to provide valuable assistance to the countries of the region. He undertook missions to Iran, Maldives, Indonesia, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Nepal and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

43. The regional adviser on data processing, provided by the Federal Republic of Germany on a funds-in-trust basis, completed his services at the end of 1975. During 1975 he undertook a number of missions to countries including those of the South Pacific region, evaluating their data processing needs and suggesting ways of improving the performance of data processing centres wherever they existed.

44. A COCENTS specialist, financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), worked in the region in 1975. He assisted in installing COCENTS package programme in a number of countries, including those of the South Pacific. This was considered to be timely in view of the forthcoming round of population censuses. The system was also proving useful for the tabulation of the World Fertility Survey.

45. A regional adviser on social statistics - the need for whose services had been voiced at many meetings of regional statisticians - joined the staff of the ESCAP Statistics Division in March 1976. He was provided by the Government of the Netherlands on a funds-in-trust basis, for two years initially. A regional adviser on vital statistics, provided through an UNFPA project, is likely to start working by mid-1976.

III. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)

46. ECA statistical activities continued to concentrate on the two basic objectives of assisting the development of African statistical services and providing data for the region as a whole. African statistics are improving as a result of data requirements for development planning and for assessing the impact of world economic problems on the region but a great deal of work has to be done before they can be considered satisfactory. The following notes summarize the principal developments during the last two years.

A. General aspects of co-ordination and development

47. The ninth session of the Conference of African Statisticians met at Lomé, Togo, in October 1975. Among the principal topics considered were: organization and staffing of national statistical services, technical assistance and training, data processing, general timeliness of data, development of standardized national accounts, revision of regional work on external trade statistics, improvement of industrial statistics, progress of the African Census Programme and the follow-up operation on household surveys. The Conference also reviewed the ECA statistical work programme and publications in the light of national requirements and those arising from the New International Economic Order.

48. A revised Bibliography of African Statistical Publications and an African Directory of Statisticians were distributed and a report on the Use of Computers by Statistical Offices in Africa was prepared. The ECA Statistical Newsletter continued but with fewer issues because of translation problems and the increasing demand for the Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin, which is tending to supersede the Newsletter as the principal general-purpose document.

49. In 1975, greater demand for more adequate data at the regional level became apparent and it was decided to develop existing activities in the form of a data bank operation involving full co-operation with the countries of the region. Preliminary plans were made for the revision and extension of existing computerized files, and the replacement of ECA equipment by a new machine with magnetic tape and disc facilities was approved. However the selected supplier had difficulties in fulfilling the equipment order. The data bank is expected to include an extensive documentation reference service.

50. A survey was conducted on the organization, activities and staffing of African national statistical services. The project arose from concerns of the Conference

of African Statisticians about the status of national services within governmental structures and staff losses arising from an unsatisfactory condition of service. Results of the study showed the concerns to be fully justified.

B. Training

51. For the biennial review of the statistical training programme, in 1975 up-to-date information was obtained on the activities of all statistical centres providing regional services including details on enrolment and examination results. Support to a number of these centres continued through lecturing assignments, participation in advisory board meetings and the organization of seminars. At the request of UNDP, preparations were made for a review of statistical training needs in Africa and for a follow-up working group scheduled for 1976.

C. National accounts, finance and prices

52. The principal regional advisory missions in national accounts and related basic series took place in the Gambia, the Upper Volta, the Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Two members of the Statistics Division of ECA participated in the Interregional Seminar on a Revised System of National Accounts at Caracas in December 1975. Their travel included visits to the United Nations Statistical Office, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for discussions on project arrangements and data exchange. Efforts are being made to develop practical collaboration between the World Bank and ECA in country missions.

53. A report on the 1974 study on the application of the revised System of National Accounts for Africa was completed, together with two papers for the Caracas meeting.

54. Estimates of gross domestic product classified by origin and expenditure for all countries of the region were extended through 1974 and provisional estimates for 1975 were compiled. Difficulties were encountered in applying general deflators to obtain national constant price series because of large price movements. Work was, therefore, initiated early in 1976 to incorporate sectoral deflators in the computerized calculations.

55. Biennial comparisons of national price data obtained from the regional purchasing power parity study were calculated, but no report was prepared because of limited staff resources. New activities on the collection of commodity production, trade and related price data were initiated but country response was too limited to provide satisfactory material for publication; the position is expected to improve in 1977. There was satisfactory progress in extending the compilation of external transactions and public sector statistics.

56. A training workshop on external transactions was organized in April 1975 as a joint project with the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics at Kampala.

Special studies included the compilation of data on patterns of private consumption expenditure in Central Africa, the growth of capital budgets and the structure and importance of non-monetary activities.

D. External trade

57. In agreement with the Conference of African Statisticians, a questionnaire on external trade statistics methods and practices was sent to all countries of the region early in 1976. The inquiry is detailed and the report will be made available as early as possible in 1977.

58. The two publications on Foreign Trade Statistics of Africa made normal progress. Series A deals with the direction of total trade while Series B provides details on the direction of commodity trade for items in excess of \$US 1,000 each year. The processing of African commodity trade data is shared with the United Nations Statistical Office, and the ECA punched card records are sent systematically to Geneva where they are transferred to magnetic tape. When the ECA computer equipment is up-graded, copies of all the tapes relating to African countries will be sent to ECA for inclusion in the data bank.

59. Plans for Series C, dealing with selected data and analytical summaries, were agreed with the Conference of African Statisticians. A provisional format is under consideration and topics of special interest are likely to be intra-African trade and terms of trade. The first issue of the new series is scheduled for 1977; in the meantime, experimntal compilations will be published in the Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin.

E. Industrial statistics

60. A review of regional progress in industrial statistics was prepared for the 1975 session of the Conference of African Statisticians and classifications were examined in connexion with United Nations Statistical Office projects. Routine work was maintained on the compilation of general industrial statistics and commodity production with special reference to energy. Plans were prepared for ongoing studies aimed at filling some of the more important data gaps of the region.

F. Other economic statistics

61. A transport statistics data base was initiated and this project is expected to receive bilateral assistance. Other topics included data on tourism and a project on food balance sheets in collaboration with FAO.

62. The ~~African~~ Statistical Yearbook for 1974 was issued late as a result of printing difficulties. The 1975 issue was completed early in 1976 but there is no information on publication dates. The Statistical and Economic Information

Bulletin is making normal progress, and No. 9 is expected to go to the printer in June 1976.

G. Demographic and social statistics

63. Administrative and technical support to the African Census Programme was maintained, together with preparatory work for the proposed African Household Survey Capability Programme (see E/CN.3/473, also before the Commission, for details on the latter).

64. The ECA/UNESCO Manual on Demographic Sample Surveys in Africa was published. Documentation was prepared for a civil registration project jointly undertaken with the Common Organization of African and Malagasy States (OCAM) and staff members participated in a meeting held in March 1976. A study on migration statistics was published. Compilation of material for the demographic and social statistics data base continued.

H. African Census Programme

65. During the reporting period population census enumerations were completed in the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, Madagascar and the Upper Volta. A further 10 countries aim to undertake censuses that they were unable to conduct during the normal period of the 1970 census round and special assistance to the more difficult cases continued. Regular work on census preparations or data processing of results was maintained in other participating countries including some which have early operations in the 1980 round of censuses.

66. A study was completed on the practical application of population census post-enumeration surveys under African conditions and preliminary data were collected for another inquiry into the enumeration of nomadic populations. Work commenced on the revision of global and regional recommendations to be used for the 1980 World Programme ~~of~~ Population and Housing Census ~~★~~.

I. African Household Survey Capability Programme

67. Following the 1974 working group on household surveys, detailed proposals for a project to assist African countries in developing permanent field survey organizations were finalized and a specification of household data requirements was prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and specialized agencies. In agreement with the Conference of African Statisticians, the programme was reoriented to place primary emphasis on household economic data relating to productive activity, employment, income distribution etc. with demographic and social characteristics as the essential supporting linkages.

68. The programme is strongly supported by African countries as well as by international agencies. The essential requirement in initiating effective field

work is a minimum of two regional advisers at ECA to work initially with a small number of selected countries in specifying the means by which field survey organizations can be developed. When precise proposals have been established in this way, more effective action can be taken in financing individual country projects and the programme as a whole. It should be noted that a few African countries are already well advanced in applying the arrangements envisaged and their activities can serve as a lead for the remainder of the region.

IV. INTER-AMERICAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE (IASI)

A. Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS)

69. COINS, composed of the chief statistical officers of the American nations, held its twelfth session at Lima, Peru, from 11 to 18 November 1975. The agenda included matters relating to the administration and operation of computers, development and use of data banks, identification of gaps between existing statistics and current requirements of users of data. COINS adopted inter-American standards for two sections of the Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics (PIEB): statistics on science and technology, and agricultural statistics on vegetables and fruits. The session also considered proposals on long-term national programmes of food and agricultural statistics, and the bases for the formulation of standards for the censuses of agriculture to be taken under the 1980 Program of the World Census of Agriculture and the Program of the Census of America. PIEB was adopted by COINS in Panama in 1964.

70. Two round tables were held during the session on topics of general interest to the statistical offices of the region. One was on sampling techniques which could be applied to the censuses to be taken as part of the Program of the 1980 Census of America (evaluation of past experience and suggestions for the future). The other dealt with achievements and objectives of the reorganization of national statistical systems, with particular reference to centralization and decentralization and its relationship to development planning.

71. With regard to statistical co-ordination, there were also informal meetings, according to subregions, of COINS members from countries belonging to the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), the Cartagena Agreement and the Central American Common Market to exchange information and viewpoints on needs for statistical data, problems faced in meeting them and possible solutions.

72. The thirteenth session of COINS is scheduled to be held in the second half of 1977, concurrently with the seventh Inter-American Statistical Conference, possibly in the Dominican Republic or in Argentina.

B. Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics (PIEB)

73. Considering the limited resources of the IASI secretariat, it is felt that the work related to basic statistics has advanced normally. The draft

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inter-American standards submitted by the COINS sub-committees have been considered and adopted by COINS itself. In view of the progress made in the revision of the various sections of PIEB, it is assumed that its publication will be initiated in 1976.

C. Program of the Census of America

1. Program of 1970

74. Of 25 countries members of IASI, 23 took their censuses of population and housing and 19 took censuses of agriculture. The activities related to these included promotion, development of inter-American standards, review of census plans, preparation or revision of census schedules, forms and instructions, participation in the organization and taking of experimental censuses, technical assistance and personnel training. These activities were carried out in collaboration with international organizations, principally those of the United Nations system (Statistical Office, Population Division, ECLA, Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) and FAO) and in some cases with national organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development.

2. Program of 1980

75. As mentioned above, COINS adopted the bases for the formulation of standards for the 1980 censuses of agriculture. An inquiry to the national statistical offices is being conducted on the topics that the respective country intends to add, delete or modify with respect to the list of topics, definitions and tabulations for the 1970 censuses of population and housing. The results of the inquiry at the regional level and the draft standards for the censuses of population and housing at the world level will be examined by the Sub-Committee on Demographic, Housing and Related Statistics of COINS, at its third session, scheduled to be held during the second half of 1976.

D. Regional Labor Statistics Program (PRET)

76. This Program was prepared in compliance with the recommendation approved by the Inter-American Economic and Social Council at its seventh meeting (Panama, 1971) and was submitted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for financing. The main objective of this project is to strengthen the institutions in each country responsible for statistics of concern to the labour sector through a systematic, long-range joint effort by the planning agencies, the national statistical services and the ministries of labour, with the support, at the international level, of organizations interested in this objective.

77. A large number of countries have supported this project and activities have been initiated. These activities include visits to several countries of the region to evaluate the status of labour statistics; direct technical assistance missions

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on labour statistics or in connexion with specific topics such as consumer price indexes, income and family expenditure surveys etc.; financing fellowships for study in the United States; course on labour statistics of subregional scope (Panama, 1974), with participants from countries of the Central American Isthmus and the Caribbean; and designation of a regional specialist on labour statistics, with headquarters in Mexico, to collaborate with the Government of Mexico in preliminary activities related to PRET. A national course on labour statistics was held in San Salvador, El Salvador in 1975. Arrangements are being made to hold a seminar on labour statistics programmes management in Mexico in 1976.

E. Technical assistance

78. During the period under review, technical assistance missions - usually of short duration - were carried out (or are in process), inter alia, in sampling, data collection, statistical publications, data processing, training of statistical personnel, statistical organization, household sample surveys, censuses of agriculture, economic indicators, educational statistics, labour statistics, industrial statistics, transport statistics and external trade statistics.

F. Statistical training

79. Statistical training activities are grouped in regional, subregional and national courses.

1. Regional courses

80. Most of these courses are conducted at the Inter-American Statistical Training Center (CIENES) at Santiago, Chile, whose programme includes three regular courses offered simultaneously and annually, and other occasional activities. During the period under review, these courses are: statistical techniques, economic and social statistics and mathematical statistics (leading to a Master's degree). An applied research programme for graduates of the course on mathematical statistics is conducted each year. The following specialized courses were also conducted at CIENES in 1975: statistical techniques on education, demographic statistics, statistics on science and technology and advanced sampling.

2. Subregional courses

81. The following were held in Panama, using the facilities offered by that Government and with the collaboration of professors of CIENES: (a) course on labour statistics (18 September-22 November 1974), with 39 participants; and (b) course on agricultural statistics (22 September-14 November 1975), with the collaboration of FAO, and with 27 participants.

3. National courses

82. At the request of the respective Governments, statistical courses have been carried out in the following countries, with the collaboration of CIENES professors: courses on statistical techniques for personnel of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística of Chile; statistical techniques and economic and social statistics at the Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Nordeste (SUDENE), in Recife, Brazil. Also, as mentioned above, a national course on labour statistics was conducted at the Dirección General de Estadística y Censos of El Salvador.

G. Publications

83. The 1974 edition of América en Cifras, composed of eight volumes, was published. Although it is published in Spanish only, an English translation of the introduction, table of contents and introductory notes, as well as of the titles, headings, foot-notes etc. of the tables is included in each volume.

84. The Boletín Estadístico, published monthly, provides data of more urgent demand produced in the period between editions of América en Cifras.

85. The quarterly journal Estadística, the official organ of IASI, constitutes one of its means of fostering statistical interchange and development in the Western Hemisphere.
