



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL**



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.3/497
18 May 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Nineteenth session
New Delhi, 8-19 November 1976
Item 10 (b) of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS

STATISTICAL WORK OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the statistical activities of the specialized agencies since the eighteenth session of the Commission, in October 1974. It covers the work of the International Labour Office (paras. 2-8), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (paras. 9-29), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (paras. 30-43), the International Civil Aviation Organization (paras. 44-49), the World Health Organization (paras. 50-69), the International Monetary Fund (paras. 70-87), the Universal Postal Union (paras. 88-90) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (paras. 91-94).

1. At its eighteenth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General entitled "Statistical work of the specialized agencies" (E/CN.3/467 and Add.1) and recommended that a further progress report should be submitted at its nineteenth session. ^{1/} The present document covers the work done by the agencies since the eighteenth session. A progress report on the statistical work of the regional commissions and the Inter-American Statistical Institute (E/CN.3/496 and Add.1) and a report on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations (E/CN.3/498) are also before the Commission.

I. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (ILO)

2. A revised compendium of international standards for labour statistics was issued in December 1975 under the title: International Recommendations on Labour Statistics. This edition includes the latest recommendations, adopted by the Twelfth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1973).

3. Active participation in the interagency programme of co-ordinated demographic projections continued. The analysis of labour force data derived from recent population censuses was intensified in 1975-1976, as more countries published the results of their population censuses carried out in or around 1970; labour force data were analysed and tabulated by sex and age and according to urban and rural distribution in order to obtain detailed data on labour force participation rates. A comprehensive data bank of population and labour force data has thus been built up and is being brought up to date. This information will form the basis for the development of a new set of labour force projections covering the period 1975-2000. The projections are now expected to be completed in 1976 and published in 1977.

4. The continuing programme of work consisting of the collection, compilation and publication of labour statistics represents 25 per cent of the total resources of the ILO statistical programme. The 1974 and 1975 issues of the Yearbook of Labour Statistics (830 and 892 pp., respectively) were published in December 1974 and 1975; the quarterly Bulletin of Labour Statistics was published regularly. Volume I (consumer prices, 300 pp.) of the 1976 edition of the Technical Guide giving summary methodological descriptions of the series published in the Yearbook and in the quarterly Bulletin, was published in January 1976, and volume II (employment, unemployment, hours of work and wages, 350 pp.) is expected to be issued in April 1976. The second volume (220 pp.) of a new edition of Household Income and Expenditure Statistics, presenting in standardized form the results of surveys conducted in Europe, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, North America and Oceania from 1960 to 1972, was published in February 1976. For World Population Year (1974), a special edition of the Bulletin of Labour Statistics was issued under the title: Labour Force and World Population Growth. For International Women's Year (1975), a booklet entitled Womanpower 1975-2000 was issued.

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5603), para. 170.

5. Technical co-operation in labour statistics involves mainly recruiting and supervising the work of experts who are assigned to countries to assist them in the development of labour statistics, particularly manpower statistics. The number of experts in the field remained around 12 during the period covered by the present report. Regional labour statisticians were in post in Asia (Bangkok) and West Africa (Dakar). Several headquarters staff members undertook advisory missions to developing countries, and others participated as lecturers in training courses for statisticians from developing countries.
6. The Bureau of Statistics also carries out a large number of miscellaneous tasks, mostly relatively limited, which together consume a sizable part of the small resources available. In response to numerous inquiries for information, a large amount of statistical data were supplied. The Bureau also made contributions to reports and studies prepared by other departments of the ILO, issued press releases on the situation of the workers in the world, computed annual estimates of days lost through industrial disputes per thousand workers, provided analyses of government reports on the application of Convention No. 63, etc.
7. On behalf of the United Nations system, continuing work has been carried out for the new International Civil Service Commission on intercity price comparisons for the determination of the post adjustments of international officials in European duty stations.
8. Finally, the ILO organized a regional Working Group on Manpower and Labour Statistics (Bangkok, October/November 1974). In addition, active ILO participation has continued in the Working Group on Social Indicators of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Statistical and Population Commissions, and the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities and on Demographic Projections of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. Representatives of the ILO also attended various other meetings and working groups, as well as regional conferences of statisticians (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America).

II. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

9. The number of countries taking a census of agriculture under the framework of the FAO programme for the decennial World Census of Agriculture (WCA) has been increasing ever since this world-wide activity started. By the end of 1975, over 100 countries had completed their censuses. The final results from 31 of these participating countries were published in the 12 issues of the Census Bulletin devised for this purpose in 1973. In addition, results from 13 other countries were prepared for publication in 1976. The results will continue to be published as received from the countries.
10. The FAO Programme for the 1980 World Census of Agriculture was approved by the 1975 FAO Conference. The Programme will be distributed to all FAO member countries in 1976. It places particular emphasis on the agricultural census as an integral part of the over-all system of agricultural statistics in the countries all over the world.

11. With the aim of improving and developing the availability of the required quantitative information relevant to food and agricultural statistics, FAO has intensified its efforts to encourage countries to prepare, implement and keep under constant review long-term national programmes of food and agricultural statistics. Emphasis is laid upon the need to integrate the various statistical projects in such a way as to achieve better efficiency, quality and consistency of related data and utilization of available resources to the greatest extent possible. Some countries have already prepared their long-term programmes of statistical activities, and others are incorporating the principles of an integrated system of agricultural statistics in their current work. In countries that receive FAO technical assistance, the experts are requested to assist in the preparation and implementation of these programmes.

12. The major emphasis in statistical analysis has continued to be placed on the Food and Population Study, leading to the Fourth World Food Survey. As in the case of previous surveys, the purpose of this study is to assess the present and future availability of food in relation to the needs of mankind. During the period under review, the depth of the analysis and the scope of the factors considered have been progressively intensified and extended. The analytical material obtained was used in the preparation of "Population, food supply and agricultural development", presented at the World Population Conference in 1974, and of the "Assessment of the world food situation, present and future", presented at the World Food Conference in 1974. The study itself was published as "Population, food supply and agricultural development" in The State of Food and Agriculture 1974. Work is currently being undertaken for the preparation of the Fourth World Food Survey, to be published in 1976.

13. Considerable research on the methodology for The Projections of Agricultural Population and Labour Force has been undertaken. As a result of a methodology developed in FAO, a revised set of these projections, covering the period 1970-2000 is being worked out reflecting also the results of the 1970 population censuses. Work on demographic projections in general and their implications on agricultural development has also been undertaken in connexion with the FAO Country Perspective Studies.

14. Increased work for the compilation of data and the review of country practices on food consumption surveys has been carried out mainly to provide data for the Food and Population Study, leading to the Fourth World Food Survey, and to meet the requirements of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. This work has provided a contribution to the Compendium of Social Statistics, which the United Nations Statistical Office is to publish in 1977. The material will also be utilized in preparing a revision of the 1964 Programme of Food Consumption Surveys.

15. The increasing policy and planning orientation of FAO statistical work requires the development and maintenance of regular series of social statistics and indicators. Indicators are being constructed from the data readily available or which can easily be collected. Work is in progress for the development of a Programme of Social Statistics and Indicators pertinent to agriculture. Attempts will be made to relate this work as much as possible with the United Nations System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS).

16. A programme has been developed to start work on a Global Nutritional Surveillance System, to be established by FAO, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. The work will involve the identification of basic data and indicators for use in this surveillance system, including the promotion of suitable systems of data collection and analysis at national and international levels. The surveillance system, which will rely greatly on the exploitation of the FAO Interlinked Computer System (ICS), will be linked with the Food Information System.

17. Work on economic accounts for agriculture is continuing. Following the publication of a report containing production accounts for agriculture at current prices for 62 countries for the period 1961-1971, steps have been taken to expand the coverage of countries up to 100 and to bring the accounts up to date, possibly covering the period 1965-1974. Some of the accounts will be published at constant prices also. A beginning will be made with the construction of capital formation accounts in the case of a few countries.

18. Increased priority has been assigned to the development of agricultural producer price series at country levels. Tentative annual average price estimates at the producers' level have been published for some 80 developing countries for a number of important agricultural commodities; data for about 100 countries will be published in 1976. In addition, the Statistics Division has assumed responsibility for the collection and analysis of country support prices for major agricultural products and has published a document entitled Agricultural Support Price Statistics covering a period of five years, which is discussed every year by the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP).

19. During the past four years, the Division has taken a leadership role in the establishment of ICS, which will provide computerized information on the basic items of agricultural information needed by FAO. Progress has been good. The availability of agricultural data has been substantially increased and steps are being taken to expand and further standardize information on such items as production, yields and trade. It is expected that the system will enable FAO to service more efficiently and promptly national and international agencies and ensure a consistent and standardized set of current and long-term series of food and agricultural statistics.

20. Supply/utilization accounts for food and agricultural commodities and related food balance-sheets covering the period 1961-1974 will be completed through ICS for most developing countries and developed countries by the end of 1976. Another feature of the supply/utilization accounts is the availability in the computerized system of technical conversion factors and nutritive values by country. Publication of food supply tables, which constitute a part of food balance-sheets, commenced in the April 1976 issue of the Monthly Bulletin of Agricultural Economics and Statistics for 40 developing countries. In these tables, food supplies were expressed in terms of calorie value, protein and fat content and they refer to average 1961-1965 and to individual years 1972, 1973 and 1974. Data for other developing and developed countries will be presented in future issues of the Bulletin. Work has been initiated for meeting the requirements of the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, including the

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preparation of current estimates and forecasts of production of major food commodities, total food and agricultural production.

21. The 1974 Production Yearbook was published in two parts, part I, consisting of information on agricultural input and output and part II, containing data on prices of agricultural products, input items, freight rates, farm wages etc. One of the main reasons for splitting the Yearbook into two parts was that most of the tables in the first part are prepared through ICS, which facilitates their processing and printing and thus makes them ready for publication before the tables in part II, which are prepared by the letter-press system. For the 1975 Production Yearbook, a special effort has been made to ensure priority treatment in printing and, as a result, it has been possible to print the entire Yearbook in a single volume as was done prior to 1974. The 1974 issue of the Trade Yearbook included a new table on country total imports and exports of agricultural products in terms of values covering the past six years.

22. The newly established Fertilizer Data Centre will provide information on availability, shortfalls, trade and international price movements of fertilizers, on production capacities and will prepare supply and demand projections. Other agricultural requisites will also be included. Long-term series, 1961-1974, for land use categories and irrigations have been built up and are now being processed. Efforts to advance considerably the publication of the Production Yearbook and the Trade Yearbook have been successful.

23. The third issue of the Yearbook of Forest Products making use of ICS in preparation of the tables has been published. The use of the computer has resulted in a substantial saving in time in completing the Yearbook, which is now published within 13 to 14 months of the end of the last year for which data are reported. Computerization has allowed the publication of special summaries of the data by countries and regions. A further benefit has been the possibility of carrying out a full-scale analysis of relationships between consumption of forest products and economic development. The annual collection of data on capacity and prospective development of capacity of the pulp and paper industry has been strengthened, and the data are now published. In a new series on the marketing of tropical wood, the species composition of the production and trade in logs and sawnwood and a technical evaluation of lesser used species is being prepared and publications for West Africa, South-East Asia and South America have been completed.

24. A set of early indicators on current production by regions and world totals, initiated in recent years has been further developed to show indicators by economic classes of countries covering all major crops and livestock products. These indicators are published in the Monthly Bulletin of Agricultural Economics and Statistics on a quarterly basis.

25. Since October 1974, the following volumes of the Yearbook of Fishery Statistics have been published: volume 36, Catches and Landings 1973; volume 37, Fishery Commodities 1973; volume 38, Catches and Landings 1974; volume 39, Fishery Commodities 1974. A significant change has been made with the computerization of the data base on catch statistics by countries, by species

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items and by fishing areas. Volume 38 is the first to be published by automated data-processing techniques. Not only have the tables for the Yearbooks and supplementary regional bulletins been computerized but the input documents (i.e. questionnaires submitted to countries for completion) have also been computerized. This greatly facilitates the submission of national statistics to FAO.

26. With the improvement in national data and with the increasing demand for sophisticated data to help in the assessment of stocks in the formulation of research management programmes by regional sea area bodies, significant improvements have been made in the presentation of the data in the Catches and Landings volumes. Some of these arrangements facilitate the extraction and publication of data in sea regionally-oriented publications. The STATLANT programme, including catch and effort data, has been extended to areas in which these details have not yet been included. Particular attention has been paid to areas, such as the West Coast of Africa, the East Coast of South America, the Caribbean and other waters of the Western Central Atlantic. Statistical improvements occurred under the Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC) and Indian Ocean Programme (IOP) for all countries fishing in the Indian Ocean.

27. Further development on the tables of fishery commodities (production as well as international trade) is pending until the new international commodity classifications have been revised and a final classification established.

28. The seventh session of the FAO Statistics Advisory Committee of Experts took place in Rome, 20-27 March 1975. Important recommendations were made regarding the implementation of the programme for the 1980 World Census of Agriculture (WCA), the development of the Global Food Information and Early Warning System, the use of the Handbook of Economic Accounts for Agriculture (a joint publication of FAO and the Statistical Office of the United Nations) and the review of FAO work on biometrics. The seventh session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics took place at Abidjan, 28 January to 3 February 1975, and the sixth session of the Asia and Far East Commission took place at Manila, 25-31 March 1976. Discussions were held on action programmes for the 1980 WCA, the statistical aspects of the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture and review of the development in economic accounts for agriculture and agricultural prices.

29. During the period reported, about 50 field experts per year were engaged in promoting the development of agricultural statistics in various countries.

III. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

A. Statistics on education

30. The second phase of the programme of education projections was launched, leading to the publication in 1976 of a series of standardized country projections. Two major studies were completed and presented to international conferences, one on trends and projections to 1985 in Africa (Conference of

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Ministers of Education of African Member States) and the other on projections of teacher requirements (International Conference on Education). Staff members participated in training seminars on education projections in various African countries. Work was started on a manual for projections of enrolment, to be completed in 1977. Preliminary methodological studies were undertaken on the projection of educational attainment and will be followed up during the course of 1976-1977.

31. Studies were completed on the following subjects: (a) special education classified by type of handicap; (b) wastage in primary education in Africa; (c) current social indicators in the field of education. (d) a system of statistics on education. The aforementioned studies were presented at international or regional conferences. A pilot study was launched for the collection of data on capital expenditure in higher education in Africa. The survey, which is directed towards testing the methodology developed, is to be completed in 1976.

32. At its thirty-fifth session, the International Conference on Education passed a resolution on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) calling upon member States, international and regional organizations to adopt and apply ISCED in all international reporting of educational data. The legal procedures for the revision of the 1958 Recommendation on the International Standardization of Education Statistics to make it compatible with ISCED have been initiated. In order to assist member States in the application of ISCED, a series of national handbooks are being prepared in collaboration with the statistical services of selected countries. One handbook has already been published (England and Wales) and others will be issued in 1976.

B. Statistics on science and technology

33. In the field of statistics on science and technology, activities have centred on further improvement and expansion of data collection relating to national activities in scientific research and experimental development (R and D). A statistical report on the manpower and expenditure for R and D in Arab countries was prepared as a reference document for the Conference of Ministers in Arab States responsible for the Application of Science and Technology to Development (CASTRARAB), Rabat, Morocco, 16-25 August 1976. Other special studies were completed in 1975, namely, a survey of R and D activities in selected organizations within the United Nations system and a study on the measurement of scientific and technological activities related to research and experimental development. Pilot projects in Latin America were completed with a symposium organized at Caracas in September 1974 and the experience and results summarized in a publication. Co-operation with the Organization of American States (OAS) was pursued in this field of statistics, in particular through participation in a seminar organized by OAS in July-September 1975 at Santiago (Chile) for Latin American officials. The methodology for a pilot survey on research and related scientific activities in social sciences and humanities was established and comments from participating countries were analysed before testing it in selected countries.

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34. As regards co-operation with other international organizations, the third meeting on statistics on science and technology, jointly organized as a seminar by the Economic Commission for Europe and UNESCO, was held at Prague in January 1976. Pursuant to a recommendation of the second joint UNESCO/ECE meeting on science statistics, two workshops were organized by UNESCO in October 1974 and June 1975 in Paris, where participants discussed problems of data collection and analysis at the national level in that field. In response to a request by the Economic and Social Council, UNESCO is taking the initiative in the development of a classification of R and D expenditure by objective in co-operation with other United Nations agencies.

35. A panel of experts met in Paris in February 1976 to discuss a basic paper which will be utilized in the preparation of a recommendation on the international standardization of science statistics. In accordance with established procedures, steps have been taken with a view to presenting such a recommendation for adoption by the General Conference in 1978.

C. Statistics on culture and communication

36. In order to extend the scope of cultural statistics to new fields, initial steps have been taken to include statistics on theatres and on public expenditure for cultural activities in the data-collection programme.

37. The General Conference, at its eighteenth session (October-November 1974), instructed that a preliminary report be made on the international standardization of radio and television statistics. The report, accompanied by the first draft of a recommendation, was sent to member States in September 1975, for comments and observations, on the basis of which a final report was prepared and the recommendation was revised accordingly. A special committee of governmental experts due to meet in June 1976 will discuss the report and finalize the draft recommendation for submission to member States with a view to its discussion by the General Conference at its nineteenth session, in October-November 1976.

D. Statistical data bank

38. The statistical data bank was further extended and developed to permit the storage and retrieval of a greater variety of statistical data for publication in the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook and in other publications. Modifications were made in the group of programmes used for table printing so as to enhance the readability of printed output. The entire chapters on population and education in the 1974 Yearbook were reproduced by photo-offset from computer output, and work has started towards the eventual production of the entire 1975 volume by this same means. A brochure was published in conjunction with the 1973 and 1974 Yearbooks giving the Spanish translations of all texts, table headings and foot-notes, and work has started towards transforming the Yearbook into a trilingual publication.

39. A new table-generating programme was written to permit the production of "country profile" type tables showing either raw data, calculated values or index numbers by reference to a base-year value.

E. Assistance to member States

40. Technical assistance for the improvement of educational statistics systems has been provided to a number of member States, upon request, and with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the technical assistance component of UNESCO/IBRD/IDA projects, and other sources of finance. The assistance provided generally includes advisory services on a full-time basis, fellowships and equipment. In July 1975, a post of regional adviser in educational statistics in Africa was established with the support of UNDP.

41. Under the Regular Programme, advisory services continue to be provided to selected countries, upon request, in the fields of statistics on science and technology and culture and communication. The creation of a post of regional adviser in science statistics in Latin America is foreseen for the second half of 1976.

42. Furthermore, UNESCO has undertaken technical assistance projects financed by UNDP, in university teaching of statistics, namely educational statistics teaching in Kenya and statistics teaching in general in Ethiopia, the Philippines, Yugoslavia and in an intercountry project in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. In addition, assistance has been provided to selected countries in the organization and conducting of national training seminars in quantitative techniques for evaluating the implications of population growth on educational requirements.

43. Several documents describing methods for projecting school enrolments in developing countries and national manuals relating the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) to the structure of education in selected countries have been published or are in preparation. A second and more comprehensive version of the Guide for the Collection of Statistics on Science and Technology is planned for publication in 1976.

IV. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

44. ICAO has continued systematically improving its statistics in the established areas of its statistical programme. This has consisted primarily in converting data processing to computerized operations and in modernizing and redesigning the statistical publications. This work has been completed for traffic, finance and traffic flow statistics of scheduled airlines and for traffic statistics of international airports.

45. During the period under review, a considerable amount of work was done in the planning and development of new projects and programmes. The preparatory work was carried out with the assistance and guidance of the ICAO Statistical Panel, which met in November 1974 and in May 1975. The plans and proposals for new developments and for improvements in the ICAO statistical programme were reviewed by the Statistics Division at its sixth session, which was held in October and November 1975. The recommendations of the Division have been acted upon by the ICAO Council, and work is now under way on several major projects.

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46. Beginning in June 1976, on-flight origin and destination statistics will be collected on an experimental basis for the international services of the world's airlines. This programme is designed to meet the need for origin and destination statistics for passengers, freight and mail on international flights.

47. Preparations are being made to collect statistics on three new subjects of growing importance to international aviation. Airport financial data will be collected from the world's principal airports beginning in 1976. Also beginning in 1976, statistics will be collected on both traffic and financial data for en route air navigation facilities and services operated by Contracting States of ICAO.

48. An ICAO Statistical Yearbook is being developed, and the first issue should be published in 1976. Also, a classification of General Aviation Flying has been established, and plans have been made for annual surveys of general aviation activity.

49. As a result of the growing need for improvement of the statistical capabilities of civil aviation departments, airports and airlines in aviation statistics, ICAO has been requested to expand its efforts in this field. A survey is being made of the needs of States for training and assistance in aviation statistics. A bibliographical service in aviation statistics has been initiated, to assist States, international organizations and others in locating needed statistical information.

V. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

50. In many of the developing countries, health statistics are incomplete and inaccurate. In developing as well as in developed countries, there is a growing awareness that traditional health statistics systems often do not fulfil the information requirements of health services and fail to respond to changing needs. Efforts are being made, therefore, to assist countries to render their health statistical information services more user-oriented and more related to objectives and outputs than in the past. Over 60 projects at country and intercountry levels are in operation with the objective of strengthening the various components of national health information systems. More than 100 fellowships are awarded every year to professional statisticians for training abroad.

51. Four WHO centres continue to advise countries on problems arising out of the use of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). They are located in Caracas for Spanish-language users, London for English, Moscow for the Slavic languages and Paris for French.

52. The International Conference for the Ninth Revision of the ICD was held at Geneva from 30 September to 6 October 1975. Apart from approving, with minor amendments, the revisions proposed by WHO, the Conference made recommendations concerning supplementary classifications of procedures in medicine and of impairments and handicaps, perinatal mortality statistics, including a special certificate of causes of perinatal death, and the collection of morbidity and mortality data by lay or para-medical personnel.

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53. Studies are under way on ICD-0, an adaptation of the ICD to oncology. The ICD-0 is intended for use in cancer registries and other agencies specializing in cancer statistics. A field-trial version was prepared and trials started on an international basis in 1975. Based on these trials, final versions in six languages are in preparation.

54. A Seminar on Family Health Statistics was held at Dar es Salaam, from 21 October to 1 November 1974, for health statisticians and administrators working in family health programmes. The curriculum focused on methodology of family health statistics relevant to African problems, within the broader framework of population and health problems of the countries.

55. A Travelling Seminar on the Collection and Utilization of Statistical Information took place in the Netherlands and Poland, from 2 to 21 June 1975, for French-speaking public health administrators, health statisticians and medical record specialists.

56. A Manual for Teachers of Health Statistics was prepared, directed primarily towards the teachers of medical undergraduates and containing descriptions of training curricula of several medical schools. It also includes a number of actual examples as models for the teaching of a few selected subjects.

57. Guidelines for medical record practice were prepared. Work progressed in the preparation of manuals on health manpower statistics, mortality analysis, fertility analysis and family planning statistics and in the revision of guidelines on hospital statistics.

58. Three consultations were held on family health statistics, viz. (a) statistical problems of measures and indices used in family planning evaluation, Geneva, 25-27 November 1974; (b) family health information systems and the role of computers in such systems, Geneva, 2-6 December 1974; and (c) the establishment of an international statistical system on maternal and childhood care services and family planning activities, Washington, D.C., 27-31 October 1975.

59. A Study Group on Statistical Indices of Family Health was convened at Geneva, 17-22 February 1975. The Group reviewed recent developments in the measurement of family health; identified and evaluated various approaches and indices of family health; and made recommendations for future action.

60. A Meeting on Monitoring of Mental Health Needs was held at Geneva, 22-27 March 1976. The meeting developed a protocol for undertaking the monitoring of mental health needs and discussed the use of monitored data for planning and evaluating national mental health programmes.

61. A Meeting of Investigators on Cancer Statistics Information Subsystems is scheduled to take place at Minsk in 1976. This meeting will review the existing national cancer statistics systems and discuss the main objectives, content and operation of such systems.

62. The inter-American investigation of mortality in childhood undertaken

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recently by WHO/PAHO (Pan American Health Organization) in 13 areas made a significant contribution to a better understanding of health problems during infancy and early childhood. The data have been subjected to continuing analysis, particularly multiple regression analysis of determinants of infant and child mortality.

63. Surveys were started a few years ago in four developing countries to provide estimates of levels and patterns of fertility and mortality in infancy and early childhood and to give information on factors determining these levels and patterns. This project is in the final phase of its implementation, and reports on three national surveys are under preparation.

64. An international comparative study of social and biological factors affecting perinatal mortality undertaken in eight countries is about to be completed, with the report in preparation. The project forms part of a co-ordinated programme to promote the collection, analysis and utilization of statistical information on health trends and differentials.

65. One of the important activities in the statistical programme is the provision of methodological support to disease control programmes and health research undertaken jointly by countries and WHO. These support activities cover a wide range of topics including sample surveys of disease prevalence, follow-up studies of community population and patients, field trials of prophylactic and therapeutic measures, health services research, computerized simulation models of disease dynamics and laboratory studies on vaccines and other biologicals.

66. WHO, in co-operation with selected hospitals and other national institutes, has initiated a number of studies on medical records in order to encourage the establishment of basic standards, to promote research and to stimulate exchange of information on a world-wide scale.

67. The World Health Statistics Annual, 1972, was published in 1975 in three volumes, viz. volume I on vital statistics and causes of death, volume II on infectious diseases (cases, deaths and vaccinations) and volume III on health personnel and hospital establishments. So far, the title of the Annual has indicated the year to which the statistics related, e.g. Annual 1972 contained statistics relating to 1972. In order to improve the timeliness of the publication, the Annual in future will contain the latest statistics available and the title will show the year of publication.

68. International statistics tend to comprise data that are heterogeneous in terms of definitions and collection procedures used, scope and coverage and degree of accuracy. Crude statistics may, therefore, be misleading if they are not accompanied by a proper analysis. For this reason increased attention is being given to providing processed, analysed and interpreted information in the monthly World Health Statistics Report. In the issues for 1975 and 1976, perinatal mortality, child health, cancer of various sites, cirrhosis of the liver, sexually transmitted diseases, mental health and hospital facilities were highlighted.

69. The major part of the 1975 issues of the WHO/HS/NAT.COM. document series

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consisted of papers emphasizing new approaches to health statistics. The Report of the Second International Conference of National Committees on Vital and Health Statistics, Copenhagen, was issued in the WHO Technical Report Series No. 559, 1974.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

A. Bureau of Statistics

70. During 1974-1975, the Bureau of Statistics continued to collect and process a growing body of statistics relevant to world monetary and payments problems; to release these in the monthly issues of International Financial Statistics (IFS) and Direction of Trade (DOT) and their annual Supplements; and to make them available in various other forms. The Bureau continued its efforts in rationalizing the means of assembling data, in normalizing the conceptual basis of compiling internationally comparable statistics and in broadening the range of their dissemination.

71. As regards data collection, the number of time series assembled directly from national sources increased sizably in topical and country coverage. Data collected for new member countries were used or are in the process of being used in the establishment of new country pages in IFS. Additional data collected for old member countries resulted, in many cases, in either enlarging the data base or revising data sections to conform to standard concepts. Use of computer-generated report forms for general statistics has improved the accuracy and currentness of such data in IFS, and the report form system has been extended to cover all financial statistics other than those provided in printed balance-sheet form. Within recent months, the Bureau has explored with several member countries the feasibility of data tape receipt as a practical means of data collection and direct entry in the Bureau's Data Fund. Direct tape exchange between data banks has proved to be an efficient means of data collection and direct entry to the Bureau's Data Fund. Tape receipt also facilitates control over time-series history and reduces the need for additional staff resources. National data are now being communicated in machine-readable form to the Data Fund from six different sources. Procedures for tape exchange are currently being implemented with three other member countries.

72. At the data-processing level, development has begun on interactive communications among users, programmes and data through video display terminals (CRT) to enable both compilers and users of the Data Fund to express their requirements to the system in terms of the data to be retrieved and the operations to be applied. A retrieval and display routine is now operational. It is expected that further development in this area will enhance ease of use of the system and result in a savings of user resources.

73. At the output end, the publication programme has developed in several new dimensions. In 1975, the Bureau introduced the production by photocomposition of English, French and Spanish editions of IFS directly from Data Fund tapes. Photocomposition includes equation-generated notes. The Bureau has developed

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automatic note generation routines which translate the equations from which IFS data are calculated into verbal statements in English, French and Spanish. The use of photocomposition has improved currentness and flexibility in the publication of IFS.

74. Another improvement introduced in IFS in 1975 is line charts produced from Data Fund tapes using a CALCOMP plotter. This new process has eliminated the costly manual preparation of charts and improved timeliness of the data plotted.

75. About one quarter of the time of the Bureau's economist staff is occupied by its technical assistance programme and other field work. The Bureau has continued to provide technical assistance in statistics to member countries under the general programme for establishment or improvement of central bank bulletins and in separate staff missions for improvement of statistical assembly in central banks. In both forms of assistance, emphasis has been given to the development and inclusion in bulletins, of financial and general statistics, prepared in accordance with classification and definitional standards that help to make such data useful for monetary authorities and others concerned with the monetary and payments problem.

76. During 1974-1975, the programme covered 15 countries. In the six years of the programme's operation, the Bureau helped to establish new central bank bulletins in 22 countries and, at the end of 1974, work was well advanced on improvement of statistical bulletins in most of the countries assisted during the year.

77. In separate short-term staff missions, the Bureau during this period assisted nine countries in monetary and general statistics and visited seven countries for the purpose of discussing with national technicians the classification of government finance statistics according to the international standard developed in the IMF. The over-all technical work covered 31 countries, of which, 8 countries were in Latin America, 5 in the Middle East, 7 in Asia, 7 in Africa and 4 in Europe.

78. For over 20 years, IMF has been compiling government finance statistics for member countries, using such data in some detail in its consultation reports and publishing aggregate data in IFS. In 1972, the IMF launched a comprehensive programme in disaggregated government finance statistics with a view to developing, compiling and publishing comparable statistics for all member countries. This programme began by carrying out further study at headquarters of government finance statistics for particular countries, expanding the number of countries for which aggregate data appear in IFS and fielding a number of missions to discuss and undertake the compilation of disaggregated data in selected countries. During the past two years a draft "Manual on government finance statistics" in English, French and Spanish has been circulated to Governments for comment, and five regional seminars have been held for discussion of the draft. Countries have appointed correspondents on government finance statistics and have completed a questionnaire calling for institutional information, statistics on central government operations and tables showing derivation of the data from national sources. There are plans to publish this questionnaire material, bring out a revised version of the Manual and initiate a training course in the IMF Institute for national officials working in this field.

B. Balance of Payments Division

1. General

79. During the period under review, the Balance of Payments Division continued to have the responsibility for formulating an international standard, embodied in the Balance of Payments Manual, for the reporting of balance-of-payments statistics; for reviewing countries' submissions for the purpose of bringing about improvements in the availability, quality and intercountry comparability of the data; for disseminating the data or preparing them for dissemination in many forms, including the Balance of Payments Yearbook and IFS; and for providing technical assistance in balance-of-payments compilation through several channels, including visits to member countries, courses in balance-of-payments methodology under the auspices of the IMF Institute, and meetings of national compilers.

2. Fourth edition of the Manual

80. Following the March 1974 meeting of working groups on problems of recording merchandise and private capital, the staff prepared a complete draft revision of the Manual that was discussed in November 1974, by a group including, for the first time, the principal experts in charge of compilation for India and the Netherlands, together with those from Australia, the Banque centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (representing a group of West African countries), Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Venezuela who had attended earlier meetings. The former participants from Ghana and Kenya were also invited but could not attend because of other duties. As in the past, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also took part in the discussions.

81. The first complete draft was well received, and participants expressed appreciation for the way in which the IMF staff had endeavoured to take into account the comments of individual national compilers and to reconcile the different viewpoints. None the less, there were still some issues on which opinion remained divided.

82. Comments received on the first draft were taken into account in the preparation of a second draft that was offered for discussion by a larger representative group, in Paris, in March 1975. The second draft, containing about 275 double-spaced pages, still raised a few difficult or controversial issues.

83. In addition to the countries and international institutions represented at the November 1974 meeting, the meeting in March 1975 was attended by representatives from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Egypt, Finland, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Sweden and Turkey. The former participants from Ghana, India, the Netherlands and Kenya could not attend for various reasons. Knowing that this was scheduled to be the final meeting, the national experts debated some of the points not settled with intensity and reopened a few others that the staff thought had previously been disposed of. Several of the more important points at issue were

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bound up with the question of balance-of-payments presentation and analysis. In the end, however, it proved possible to accommodate the divergent views.

84. In June 1975 a third draft, reflecting the revisions agreed upon during the March 1975 meeting, was sent to the balance-of-payments compilers of all member countries of IMF. Comments received on that draft are now being used in preparing the final draft of the Manual, which should become available in the near future.

3. Computerization

85. Steps have been taken for computerizing the office procedures for reviewing and disseminating the data reported by countries. For that purpose, all data, all routine calculations, including arithmetical verifications, and all type-setting requirements are now being stored on magnetic tape. These steps have already led to an increase in the quantity and an improvement in the quality of data that are being published in IFS and in the Balance of Payments Yearbook. In addition, they have made it possible to issue a Supplement to the Balance of Payments Yearbook, containing a world summary of international transactions, and to increase the data made available through computer tape subscriptions. Once completed, possibly in 1977, these steps are expected to bring about additional improvements in this area.

4. Technical assistance

86. Since October 1974, staff members visited Lesotho, Mauritania, Nepal and Portugal for the purpose of providing recommendations for the compilation of balance-of-payments statistics to the national compilers. It is expected that a greater demand for such assistance will develop, following the introduction of the fourth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual; plans to meet that demand are being made.

87. Furthermore, also since October 1974, three intensive courses in balance-of-payments methodology were held at IMF headquarters; two were in English and one was in Spanish. Such courses are regularly scheduled so as to provide eight weeks of training to approximately 25 participants at a time.

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

A. General

88. The importance of statistics in UPU activities was recognized at the establishment of UPU more than 100 years ago, and the publication of data on the postal services of the member States has been assured since 1875. The nature of the data has in the course of the years undergone various changes, which led, pursuant to resolution C 35 of the 1964 UPU Congress at Vienna, to the publication of Statistique des services postaux containing 98 items.

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B. New policy

89. The 1974 Congress at Lausanne, accepted the principle of broadening the postal statistics as well as adapting the statistical items to the needs of the member States of UPU. This marked the beginning of intense activity with a view to revising and improving the system of international postal statistics. Prior to 1973, the UPU statistical activities aimed only at information; since then, they have had two complementary goals: (a) internationally, to deduce systematically the general trends of postal traffic and the means used to deal with this traffic, as well as the interdependence of postal development and growth in the economic, social and cultural spheres; and (b) nationally, to promote the use of statistics by postal administrations as an effective instrument for the management and planning of their services.

C. Measures adopted

90. The results attained by the end of March 1976 can be summarized as follows:

(a) A revised list of some 200 items of Statistique des services postaux was drawn up in October 1974, the definitions and the methods of collection specified for each. In addition, the International Bureau was charged with preparing a brief annual report on the state of the postal services, based on the statistical data collected;

(b) A training manual is published for the postal employees responsible for data collection; an aide-mémoire has been proposed for high postal employees;

(c) A data bank comprising statistical information for the period 1964-1973 was created. A programme aimed at improving the quality of the data by means of logical and chronological controls is under way;

(d) A consultative group of statisticians is being created to give the International Bureau technical advice, and it has been recommended that each national postal administration create a liaison service on statistical matters;

(e) An action programme consisting of three priority projects has been established (see E/CN.3/471, paras. 119-121, for details). However, because of difficulties primarily of an economic nature, the programme will probably be delayed.

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT)

A. Tariff and trade data base

91. The base covers, so far, 19 developed countries and is designed to supply basic and up-to-date documentation required in trade negotiations. The customs tariff data included in the base were updated to 1974 and import statistics are at present being brought up to 1974. The data are collected from national

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authorities. From this documentation, a series of analytical tables was produced in order to enable both developed and developing Contracting Parties to carry out an assessment of the various techniques and modalities envisaged in the multilateral trade negotiations. Copies of the basic files are currently made available to participating Governments. Summarized statistics were published in 1974 and again in 1976.

B. Statistics on textiles

92. A regular reporting scheme of textile and apparel statistics designed to meet the requirements of the Textiles Committee under the Arrangement Regarding International Trade in Textiles was established towards the end of 1974. Under this scheme, quarterly statistics on production and trade in textile and apparel products of cotton, wool and man-made fibres, as well as quarterly employment statistics and annual value added and investment statistics for the textile industry and the apparel industry, are supplied by countries participating in this Arrangement.

C. Statistics on world trade

93. Statistics on international trade and related subjects required for the analysis of world trade in 1974 and in 1975 were collected and published in the annual GATT publication. These statistics are in general based on compilations by the United Nations Statistical Office and specialized agencies (mainly IMF and FAO) and OECD, as well as on national statistical publications.

D. Statistical compilations required by various committees of the Contracting Parties

94. The compilation of statistics or background documentation for studies on current problems in the field of commercial policy, which the Contracting Parties or their subsidiary bodies require, has accounted for a significant part of the statistical work of the secretariat. In general, such documentation covers various fields of world production, trade and prices and is, as far as possible, based on published statistics. The compilations recently prepared concerned textiles, tropical products, certain temperate zone agricultural commodities, metals and various manufactured goods.
