

Distr.
RESTRICTED

Conference room paper No. 1
28 July 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Nineteenth session
New Delhi, 8-19 November 1976
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Notes on items of the provisional agenda

These notes are provided to the members of the Commission in order to facilitate their work.

Item 3 (a). Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination

Documentation: "Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination: report of the sixth session" (E/CN.3/470)

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the various items discussed in this report under the appropriate items of the agenda, and to make recommendations regarding the next session of the Working Group, scheduled for 1977.

Item 3 (b). International statistical programmes, 1977-1981

Documentation: "International statistical programmes, 1977-1981" (E/CN.3/471 and Add.1)

This document contains an integrated programme of international statistical activities planned by organizations, both in the United Nations system and outside of it, for the period 1977-1981. The programmes, which are arranged according to major statistical policy objectives and by organization, represent the ones having the highest priority, for the period, in each agency's statistical programme.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to review and comment on the major statistical policy objectives with a view to their reassessment, and comment on the priority programmes of the United Nations, of the specialized agencies, of other intergovernmental organizations and of

non-governmental organizations and to draw the particular attention of developing countries to the importance of including statistical plans within their over-all development plans.

Item 4 (a). Technical assistance for the improvement of statistics in the developing countries: Basic problems and issues

Documentation: (1) "Basic problems and issues" (E/CN.3/472 and Add.1)

The Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, at its sixth session, expressed the view "that there was a need to include an item on the agenda of the Statistical Commission at its nineteenth session on co-ordinating and rendering more effective statistical assistance to developing countries. The item should be concerned with the experience of countries in this regard, and the members of the Working Group from Brazil, Kenya and Malaysia agreed to submit country papers to the Commission, briefly summarizing what they viewed as the basic issues" (E/CN.3/470, para. 7).

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to suggest improvements in the technical assistance rendered to developing countries in the light of the issues raised in the two documents.

(2) "African household survey capability programme"
(E/CN.3/473)

The Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, at its sixth session, discussed the importance of developing national capabilities for carrying out household surveys on a continuing basis so as to provide timely and reliable social, economic and demographic statistics on an integrated basis and assigned a high priority to this effort. It also requested the Economic Commission for Africa to prepare a summary, for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its nineteenth session, of proposals that were being developed for improving national household survey capabilities in African countries.

The document, which was prepared in response to that request (a) summarizes the considerations which led to the development of the proposed African household survey capability programme; (b) outlines the main features of the programme, including its national and regional components; (c) reviews some of the technical aspects of the national household survey activities envisaged under the programme; (d) describes the nature of international technical and financial assistance required; (e) considers the relationship between this programme and other ongoing statistical operations in African countries; and (f) indicates the relatively limited progress achieved so far in the programme's implementation.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on these proposals, consider their wider applicability to other developing regions and propose means of mobilizing further support for this activity.

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Item 4 (b). International technical assistance in statistics, 1977-1981

Documentation: "International technical assistance in statistics, 1977-1981"
(E/CN.3/474)

In accordance with the wishes expressed by the Statistical Commission at its eighteenth session, the document sets out the activities of the United Nations system, and of several organizations outside the system, in all areas of technical assistance in statistics, for the period 1977-1981. It represents an updating of the previous report covering 1975-1979, which was an outcome of Economic and Social Council resolution 1566 (L).

Chapters I and II set out the important limitations of the estimates developed for the report while chapter III presents an over-all summary of technical assistance activities for the period under review.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the trends in technical assistance as presented in the over-all summary, and in the detailed report covering advisory services, training, provision of equipment, technical guidance and programme formulation, support and evaluation and suggest where, in its view, changes would be desirable.

Item 5 (a). Price and quantity statistics

Documentation: "Draft guidelines on principles of a system of price and quantity statistics" (E/CN.3/475)

Work on an integrated system of price and quantity statistics was initiated by the Statistical Commission at its fifteenth session in resolution 1 (XV), paragraph 7. The work in progress was considered by the Commission at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions and also at various regional meetings. Most recently, it was discussed by the Expert Group on Price and Quantity Statistics.

This paper is addressed to problems of collection of data and compilation of indexes for prices and quantities. The uses of price and quantity statistics and the need for guidelines; the over-all structure of the proposed comprehensive system of price and quantity statistics and how the various kinds of indexes that are needed fit into it are discussed. The strategy of data collection is considered: choice of units of observation, the design of the data collection programme, and problems arising in specific areas. The actual compilation of the indexes and the types and characteristics of formulae and the choice of formulae and weighting methods are discussed. Lastly, questions of publication and other forms of retrieval and dissemination are considered.

The structure of the system of price and quantity statistics proposed is based upon the national accounts and balances, and it makes use of the various standard international classification systems. This is not intended to imply, however, that all index computations should be subordinated to the needs of the national accounts and balances. Price and quantity statistics are multipurpose tools, serving the

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needs of Governments and enterprises in their day-to-day decision-making, on the one hand, and providing the basis for understanding the behaviour of prices, output and employment, and their relation to economic policy, on the other. The system proposed is designed to serve all of these varied kinds of needs, and at the same time to be ordered and consistent and a true reflection of the underlying economic interrelationships.

Proposed action by the Commission. This paper contains draft international guidelines. The Commission may wish to recommend their use by Member States and to request the preparation of a publication on guidelines, together with technical manuals on specific aspects of the sources and methodologies for gathering price and quantity statistics.

Item 5 (b). Energy statistics

Documentation: "Towards a System of Integrated Energy Statistics" (E/CN.3/476)

The programme of the Statistical Office for the development of a global System of Integrated Energy Statistics (SIES) is described in this paper. The principal goals are international harmonization, timeliness, comparability and comprehensiveness of statistics. The focus of the programme is the extension of current work into energy balances. The problems of units of measurement, classification, conceptual and methodological guidelines are described, and interfaces between energy and related statistics identified.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission is requested to comment on the programme and to provide guidance and advice.

Item 5 (c). System of national accounts and balances

Documentation: (1) "Statistical Office of the United Nations" (E/CN.3/498, paras. 27-28)

This document contains a brief section (paras. 27-28) on a review of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the results of the Interregional Seminar on a Revised System of National Accounts (Caracas, 8-19 December 1975).

(2) "The feasibility of welfare-oriented measures to complement the national accounts and balances" (E/CN.3/477)

This paper contains a critical review of the concepts, methodologies and empirical applications of monetary measures of welfare. Some of the individual activities discussed are already embodied in the national accounts and balances but are not identified separately. Others are excluded from the national accounts and balances, and monetary values can only be derived for them by imputation. The main categories discussed are aspects of the household economy, including unpaid activities, instrumental expenditures such as commuting, subsidies received from enterprises, and the treatment of the services of consumer durables; the treatment

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of intermediate expenditure of the Government; and treatment of the environment. The paper discusses the implications of the various activities for the measurement of assets as well as income flows, and for international comparison. It stresses throughout that the aim is not to suggest a reshaping of the national accounts, but to set the major aggregates of the national accounts into a broader perspective.

It is suggested that priority areas for further work should include the establishment of a system of environmental statistics and the promotion of a more detailed functional analysis of expenditures by general government. With regard to most non-market activities, the paper concludes that primary attention might be given, by official statistical services, to the provision of the required non-monetary basic data - numbers of people involved, amounts of time spent, physical damages, etc. The conversion of these physical measures into monetary values is more properly a task for private researchers, at least for the present.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the relevance, scope and usefulness of the discussion of welfare measures to supplement the national accounts and balances, and propose what direction further work should take.

- (3) "Summary of recommendations of the Expert Group on Welfare-oriented Supplements to the National Accounts and Balances and Other Measures of Levels of Living" (E/CN.3/477/Add.1)

This report presents the conclusions of an Expert Group meeting held, on the recommendation of the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission, to consider welfare-oriented supplements to the national accounts and balances and other measures of levels of living.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to consider the document in conjunction with E/CN.3/477 (see above) and E/CN.3/488 (see item 6 (g) below). Taking these into account, the Commission may wish to comment upon the conclusions reached by the Expert Group and to suggest directions for further work.

Item 5 (d). Public sector statistics

- Documentation: (1) "Reconciliation of the United Nations 'Draft manual on public sector statistics' and the International Monetary Fund draft 'Manual on government finance statistics'" (E/CN.3/478)

The preparation of a manual on public sector statistics has been part of the programme of work of the United Nations Statistical Office on the system of national accounts and balances since the adoption by the Commission in 1968 of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA). A "Draft manual on public sector statistics" was circulated to national statistical offices and interested international agencies in November 1975.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 1974 circulated to Governments a draft "Manual on government finance statistics". During 1975 and 1976, the draft was discussed at five regional seminars. It is intended to produce a revised version at the end of 1976.

While the two manuals are designed to meet somewhat different needs and will therefore necessarily differ in some respects, there is a clear and obvious benefit in ensuring that they are as closely reconciled as possible. To this end, the staffs of the United Nations Statistical Office and the IMF Bureau of Statistics have been working together to bring the two manuals into harmony. The report outlines the solutions that are proposed.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to consider the approach to reconciliation described in the report and to comment upon its feasibility and usefulness.

- (2) "Draft detailing the classification of the purposes of government" (E/CN.3/479 and ST/ESA/STAT.82)

The preparation of a more detailed version of the purpose classification of expenditures of government in the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) is part of the work programme of the Statistical Office approved by the Commission at its seventeenth session. Document ST/ESA/STAT.82 was accordingly prepared and circulated to national statistical offices and interested international organizations for comment. E/CN.3/479 is a summary of the comments received on ST/ESA/STAT.82.

The detailed classification is intended to meet needs that have become apparent since the classification appearing in SNA was developed. Special attention is devoted to three areas: expenditures on social and community services, needed in connexion with the further development of social and demographic statistics; expenditures on research and development; and expenditures relating to environmental pollution.

A number of the comments received dealt with the principles underlying the classification in these areas. Others were concerned with over-all questions relating to the classification as a whole. The paper treats these general topics, dealing first with questions of compatibility with other classifications and of general structure, and then with each of the areas listed above, followed by specific comments on particular items in the draft classification.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment upon the proposed classification, indicating what choices should be made and what further work needs to be done to bring the classification to final form.

Item 6 (a). 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme

Documentation: (1) "1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme"
(E/CN.3/480)

The document has been prepared in accordance with the Commission's decision that it receive an interim report on the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme at its nineteenth session.

The document reports on regional and global activities in the development of international recommendations for the 1980 round of population and housing censuses, sets forth interim proposals with respect to the 1980 recommendations, briefly outlines accomplished and planned direct technical assistance activities and indicates other activities under the Programme.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to (a) comment on the programme for developing international recommendations for the 1980 censuses and on the interim proposals with respect to these recommendations, (b) request the Secretary-General to circulate the contents of chapter III of the report, amended to reflect the Commission's views, to Member States and (c) request the Secretary-General to convene an interregional working group to develop draft international recommendations for the 1980 population and housing censuses. The Commission may also wish to (a) comment on other aspects of this report and (b) suggest further possibilities for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of technical assistance activities carried out in connexion with the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

(2) "Cartography in the work of a national statistical office"
(E/CN.3/481)

The importance of cartography to the work of national statistical agencies, particularly in relation to work on population censuses, has long been recognized, and the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, at its sixth session, requested that a report on this topic be considered by the Commission at its nineteenth session.

The report, drawing largely on the experiences of the Central Bureau of Statistics of Kenya, reviews the role that cartography plays in population census and other census and survey operations and in the analysis and presentation of statistical results and summarizes some promising work carried out by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Kenya using imagery obtained through remote sensing of the earth by artificial satellites. On the basis of this review of the varied and specialized needs of a national statistical office for cartographic services, the report outlines the grounds for establishing a continuing cartographic capability within a statistical office and indicates some forms of international co-operation and assistance that could facilitate the creation and maintenance of this capability, particularly in developing countries.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the report, bearing in mind the relevance of cartographic services to population and housing census activities and to other national statistical programmes, and to consider the suggestions for further activities, both at the national and international level, contained in the report.

Item 6 (b). Migration statistics

Documentation: (1) "Draft recommendations on statistics of international migration" (E/CN.3/483)

At its seventeenth session, the Statistical Commission commented on proposals for revision of the existing recommendations on statistics of international migration and indicated steps to be taken in the preparation of final draft recommendations for its consideration.

The document has been prepared on the basis of the Commission's comments and in accordance with the steps it indicated. The document reviews the stages in its development, considers the need for statistics of international migration and for revision of the previous United Nations recommendations and present draft recommendations on (a) the definitions of categories of international migrants and of immigrant stock; (b) sources of data on migrants and immigrant stock; (c) characteristics of migrants and immigrant stock to be investigated; and (d) tabulations and publication of statistics.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to (a) adopt the revised recommendations with any required modifications; (b) request the Secretary-General to publish and circulate the recommendations, as modified; and (c) request the Secretary-General to draft guidelines on consolidated statistics of all international arrivals and departures or, alternatively, to prepare technical manuals and provide other forms of assistance to Member States to help in the implementation of the revised recommendations on statistics of international migration.

(2) "Statistics of internal migration" (E/CN.3/484)

At its seventeenth session, the Statistical Commission considered proposals for guidelines on statistics of internal migration and recommended the preparation of a study of national practices relating to the statistics, to be used as a basis for possible international guidelines.

The document sets forth provisional results of the study and some conclusions that the Commission may wish to call to the attention of Governments. After a review of the stages in its development, the document very briefly considers the need for statistics of internal migration; explains how the study of national practices was conducted; sets forth the objectives of the document; examines some national uses of data on internal migration; the definition of internal migration; sources of data and national practices in their collection, tabulation and publication; and concludes with suggestions for improvements appropriate to the present stage of development of the national statistics.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to request the Secretary-General to revise the document as appropriate, circulate it for the information of Member States and inform the Commission, at its twentieth session, if there are any considerable differences between the provisional and final results of the study of national practices.

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- (3) "The improvement of statistics on the outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries"
(E/CN.3/485)

This document has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1904 (LVII) of 1 August 1974 entitled "Outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries", particularly paragraph 5 thereof, dealing with the improvement of statistics on the migration of highly qualified persons.

The document sets forth the problems involved in defining a trained migrant from the statistical point of view, presents an overview of what has already been accomplished by the statistical units of the United Nations system in generating and bringing together data on the outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries, suggests what remains to be done by the countries and by the United Nations system and indicates what kinds of data may at present be available in countries.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the document and to request the Secretary-General to revise it in accordance with the Commission's discussion and (a) to provide the revised document, together with any revised recommendations on statistics of international migration that it may adopt, to the Committee on Science and Technology for Development; and (b) to circulate the two documents to members of the international statistical community.

Item 6 (c). Tourism statistics

Documentation: (1) "Draft guidelines on statistics of international tourism"
(E/CN.3/486)

This paper presents the draft international guidelines on a simplified and phased programme of statistics of tourism, which the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission requested. The draft guidelines concentrate on the concepts and definitions, classifications and tabulations of statistics on non-resident visitors in a country and on residents of a country visiting abroad and deal briefly with the sources and methods of gathering and compiling the data. Fewer items of data and classifications of them are proposed in the case of the latter international travellers than the former primarily because of the greater difficulties of gathering and compiling statistics. In order to keep the proposed programme of statistics of tourism simple, a number of aspects of these statistics, for example domestic tourism, the activities and capacity of specific tourist resorts, or the employment, capital formation and income of establishments principally serving tourists, are not covered in the draft international guidelines. Furthermore, in order to tailor the simplified programme of tourism statistics to the possibilities of countries, it is suggested that the proposed statistics be developed in four phases of increasing difficulty.

This paper was circulated to national statistical authorities and interested international organizations for comment; the comments are summarized in E/CN.3/487 (see below). The paper was also considered in April 1976 at a Meeting on

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Statistics of Tourism of the Conference of European Statisticians; the report of the Meeting (CES/AC.39/10) will be available during the Commission session.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to recommend the draft international guidelines presented in this paper, modified in the light of the comments of national statistical authorities and international organizations and the discussions and conclusions of the Commission, for the use of Member States in developing and improving their statistics of international tourism; and to request the Secretary-General to (a) prepare, issue and circulate a publication on the simplified and phased international guidelines which are approved by the Commission; (b) prepare a technical manual on the substance, sources and methodologies of gathering and compiling statistics of international tourism, in particular on the use of sampling.

- (2) "Summary of comments on 'Draft guidelines on statistics of international tourism' (E/CN.3/486)" (E/CN.3/487)

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to take the comments summarized in the document into account in its consideration of E/CN.3/486, as well as in its consideration of priorities for further work in this area as outlined in the "Draft recommendations on statistics of international migration" (E/CN.3/483, para. 4 (c); see item 6 (b) above).

Item 6 (d). Strategy for further work on a System of Social and Demographic Statistics

Documentation: "Strategy for further work on a System of Social and Demographic Statistics" (E/CN.3/489)

This paper was requested by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its sixth session, following the recommendation of the twenty-third plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians.

The paper reviews the work that has been done to date on the development of a system of social and demographic statistics and suggests directions that future work might take. Two areas are identified as likely to be of greatest utility: (a) specification, testing, and agreement upon concepts, definitions and classification systems; and (b) experimental empirical implementation of some parts of the proposed data framework. Three annexes contain a summary of prior consideration of this topic by the Statistical Commission, the Conference of European Statisticians and various of their subsidiary bodies; a list of meetings held and scheduled to be held by international bodies in this area, and the papers prepared for these meetings; and representative classification systems in particular special fields proposed to or adopted by international bodies.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to consider the alternative conceptions of SSDS that have arisen in the course of its development and, in the light of these alternatives, to comment upon the directions to be taken in future work. In particular, the Commission may wish to recommend: (a) the most

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effective means for conducting the work and ensuring co-ordination among the concerned international organizations and with national statistical offices; and (b) the tasks to which priority should be assigned.

Item 6 (e). Framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics

Documentation: "A draft framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics for developing countries" (E/CN.3/490)

At its seventeenth session, the Statistical Commission discussed the reports of the Statistical Office and of the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of a System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS) and recommended that a draft version of a system suitable for use by developing countries be prepared. At its eighteenth session, some questions were raised about the usefulness of such a separate system, and it was suggested that the greater need in developing countries might be for improvement and systematization of social statistics. Nevertheless, the preparation of a draft version was endorsed. This document presents a draft framework for the integration and analysis of social statistics for developing countries, based on the selection and adaptation of material from the United Nations publication, Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics. The draft framework is intended to provide guidance to developing countries on approaches to improvement and integration of social statistics which it may be feasible for developing countries to apply in the medium-term future, consonant with their statistical and social circumstances and priorities for improving the welfare and living conditions of their populations. The approach presented is one of step-by-step integration and systematization of social statistics and social indicators, fully integrated with the continuous development of the required basic statistics in the social, demographic and related fields. The document does not propose new methods or definitions for social statistics but rather presents a framework for co-ordinating and harmonizing concepts and classifications based on existing recommendations and guidelines of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission is invited to comment on the document and to propose what further action should be taken.

Item 6 (f). Promoting the improvement of social statistics in developing countries

Documentation: "Promoting the improvement of social statistics in developing countries" (E/CN.3/482)

At its eighteenth session, the Statistical Commission agreed that the United Nations Statistical Office would prepare a strategy paper on promoting the improvement of social statistics in developing countries for consideration at its nineteenth session. The paper has been addressed both to the producers and users of social statistics in recognition of the need for a joint approach and is concerned primarily with the practical problems of organizing and implementing an integrated programme of improving social statistics in developing countries. It

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examines the nature and purpose of social statistics and the reasons for a programme to improve them and considers the uses to which they can be put and the value of placing them in a co-ordinated general framework for integration such as that discussed in the document "A draft framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics for developing countries" (E/CN.3/490). It suggests possible ways of developing practical and viable statistical operations to make them more relevant, sufficient, timely and co-ordinated. The purpose of the paper is not to suggest a complete statistical programme but to examine the problems that need to be overcome if suitable programmes can be realized.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the paper and indicate what future international work should be undertaken in this area. It may also wish to discuss the means of improving social statistics in the developing countries themselves and of achieving this in a co-ordinated manner.

Item 6 (g). Social indicators

Documentation: "Draft guidelines on social indicators" (E/CN.3/488)

This document is intended as a reference for work on social indicators in national statistical offices and other governmental units concerned with social statistics, and in other institutions and by individuals interested in official work in this area. It provides a review of concepts of social indicators which have been advanced in national and international work and discusses in detail the way in which social indicators may be selected and defined within a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics. The draft guidelines show how social indicators might be linked to such a framework, both strengthening it and benefiting from it. Illustrative series and classifications for social indicators are also shown and described, which countries may consult in designing a programme of indicators in the context of an over-all programme to strengthen their basic statistics in the various social and demographic fields, to integrate them and to link them more closely and consistently with related economic and other statistics.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to (a) comment on the scope, concepts and purposes of social indicators discussed in the draft guidelines, in the context of a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics; (b) recommend preliminary guidelines; (c) request that the preliminary guidelines should be issued and circulated; (d) recommend what further action should be undertaken, in the light of the strategy for further work on an SSDS (E/CN.3/489) and the work on welfare-oriented measures (E/CN.3/477).

Item 7. Environment statistics

Documentation: (1) "Co-ordination of environment statistics"
(E/CN.3/491 and Add.1)

In accordance with the wishes of the Statistical Commission at its eighteenth session, its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and

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Co-ordination, at its sixth session, considered a paper on the activities of the United Nations system in environment statistics. The paper has been brought up to date and expanded to include the activities of organizations outside the United Nations system. It is being submitted to the Commission at the request of the Working Group.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the extent, character and co-ordination of current and envisaged activities on statistics of the environment as set out by the United Nations, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, CMEA, OECD, WMO and IMCO.

(2) "Draft guidelines for statistics on materials/energy balances" (E/CN.3/492)

The Statistical Commission considered a draft system of environment statistics at its eighteenth session, and recommended that work in this area should continue. The paper deals with one part of the over-all framework of environment statistics proposed, namely, statistics on materials/energy balances, proposing draft guidelines for the compilation of such statistics. It is designed on the same principles as the System of National Accounts, and is entirely compatible with the national accounts. It is also entirely compatible with "Towards a System of Integrated Energy Statistics" (E/CN.3/476). Unlike the latter, which is focused upon short-run possibilities and objectives, the paper is concerned with a longer-run statistical programme, one which may be thought of as an objective towards which to aim, rather than a project for immediate implementation.

The paper discusses the uses of statistics of this type, design criteria and the structure of the proposed framework. It then provides the necessary definitions, gives a short note on the assessment of environmental damages and abatement costs, and suggests possible ways to approach implementation in the shorter run.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment upon the scope, feasibility and desirability of the framework described, as a basis for organizing statistics on materials and energy balances, in the light of the relationship of that framework to the wider body of environmental statistics, on the one hand, and to the national accounts and balances, on the other hand.

(3) "The feasibility of welfare-oriented measures to complement the national accounts and balances" (E/CN.3/477, chap. IV, Measures of environmental conditions and pollution)

Item 8 (a). International Standard Classifications of All Goods and Services (ICGS)

Documentation: "International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS)" (E/CN.3/493, Introduction and parts I-IV)

At the eighteenth session, the Statistical Commission requested that a revised

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draft ICGS be considered at the nineteenth session. E/CN.3/493 (Introduction) deals with the nature and uses of ICGS, the criteria employed to form the categories making up the two levels of the classification, the degree of harmonization between ICGS and other international classifications, the content of selected goods and services categories and what needs to be done to make ICGS operational. The classification itself is an annex, issued as four separate documents (E/CN.3/493, parts I-IV).

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to approve ICGS and recommend its use by countries.

Item 8 (b). Expert Group on Harmonization of Statistical Classifications

- Documentation:
- (1) "Summary of comments on the report of the Expert Group on Harmonization of Statistical Classifications" (E/CN.3/494)
 - (2) "The harmonization of statistical classifications; report of a meeting of an Expert Group" (ST/ESA/STAT/78)

The Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, at its sixth session, recommended inclusion of an item on the agenda of the Commission, at its nineteenth session, on the harmonization of statistical classifications. The problem of harmonization was the subject of a meeting of an Expert Group (New York, September-November 1974). The report of the Expert Group (ST/ESA/STAT/78) will be available to the Commission as a background document.

The report of the Expert Group was widely circulated among national statistical offices and interested international organizations within and outside the United Nations system, with the request that comments on it be sent to the United Nations Statistical Office. E/CN.3/494 is a summary of the comments received. It begins with a brief review of the experts' recommendations; a summary of the comments follows; and it concludes with a reformulation of the proposed work programme of the Expert Group in the field of economic statistical classifications which reflects the views of those responding to the request for comments.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the proposed programme of work and on the timing and priorities of the various projects.

Item 9. Statistical organization

- Documentation: "The organization of national statistical services; a review of major issues" (E/CN.3/495)

At its eighteenth session, the Statistical Commission requested that "statistical organization" should be included in the agenda for its nineteenth session. The paper has been designed to provide a setting for discussion by the Commission. It describes alternative forms of internal organization, stressing that, whatever form is used, there is an overriding need to render visible and

effective the across-the-board (horizontal) activities with a view to evolving harmonization in the statistical process and the statistical outputs. It proceeds to a discussion of the desirable degree of centralization of the statistical services and its limits. Attention is then turned to the "external capability" of the statistical agency, covering arrangements designed to enable the agency, on the one hand, to enhance the probability that the statistics are used and, on the other, to gain the co-operation of respondents. This is followed by a discussion on the "internal capability" required to enable the statistical agency to reach its objectives. Emphasis is given to the interdisciplinary character of the statistical process, the vital role of a permanent field organization and related cartographic and sampling expertise to carry out regular surveys and censuses, the need for organizing flexible storage and retrieval systems to provide prompt and diverse services and the important place of research and analysis in statistical work. The role of planning of statistical programmes to take account of the essentially unified character of the statistical system, the time intervals involved in producing new or improved statistics, the need for timeliness in outputs and the far-reaching impact of the computer are then discussed.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the paper and to indicate the topics that should be considered in further work on statistical organization.

Item 10 (a). Regional conference of statisticians and similar bodies

Documentation: "Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies" (E/CN.3/496 and Add.1)

The 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.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the statistical activities of the regional commissions and the Inter-American Statistical Institute.

Item 10 (b). Statistical work of the specialized agencies

Documentation: "Statistical work of the specialized agencies" (E/CN.3/497)

The 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.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the statistical work of the specialized agencies.

Item 10 (c). Statistical Office of the United Nations

Documentation: (1) "Statistical Office of the United Nations" (E/CN.3/498)

The document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations since the eighteenth session of the Commission, in October 1974.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to comment on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations.

(2) "Programme objectives, medium-term plan, 1978-1981, and work programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations" (E/CN.3/499 and Conference room paper No. 2)

The two documents present the programme objectives and work programme of the Statistical Office for 1977-1978 and the medium-term plan for the period 1978-1981. They provide the objectives of the Statistical Office together with a detailed description of the work programme through which the objectives will be implemented.

Proposed action by the Commission. The Commission may wish to approve the objectives and work programme of the Statistical Office and request the Secretariat to implement the projects listed therein, taking into account the conclusions reached by the Commission at its nineteenth session.
