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PROGRESS REPORT ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WORK ON  
SOCIAL INDICATORS

Report of the Secretary-General

#### SUMMARY

The present document has been prepared pursuant to the Commission's decision at its nineteenth session that the Secretariat should continue to keep national and international work on social indicators under review and report to it at its twentieth session on recent developments in this field. The Commission particularly stressed the importance of continued international co-operation and co-ordination of work on social indicators.

This review contains two analytical sections. A section on national activities in the field of social indicators presents examples of recent compendia of social statistics and indicators in both developed and developing countries and reviews national work on indicators to monitor and assess socio-economic development and for use in social reporting, in satellite accounts to national accounts and balances, in studying social or client groups and in conjunction with work on a framework for social statistics. A section on international activities reviews general programmes for the development of social indicators in international agencies and summarizes work on the development of indicators in specific fields, mainly in the United Nations specialized agencies. The annex contains two tables. The first compares subject-matter coverage of selected compendia of social statistics and indicators from four developed countries, three developing countries and the United Nations Compendium of Social Statistics; the second compares subject-matter coverage of general international programmes on social indicators.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1 - 2	4
I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION . . . . .	3	4
II. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES . . . . .	4 - 22	4
A. Compendia of social statistics and indicators . . . . .	5 - 9	4
B. Monitoring and assessing socio-economic development . . . . .	10 - 13	7
C. Social reporting and analysis . . . . .	14 - 17	9
D. Satellite accounts to the national accounts and balances . . . . .	18 - 19	11
E. Social or client groups . . . . .	20 - 21	11
F. Social statistics framework . . . . .	22	12
III. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES . . . . .	23 - 38	12
A. General programmes . . . . .	24 - 31	12
B. Development of indicators in specific fields . . . . .	32 - 38	15

Annex

TABLE 1. SUBJECT-MATTER COVERAGE OF SELECTED COMPENDIA OF SOCIAL STATISTICS  
 AND INDICATORS

TABLE 2. SUBJECT-MATTER COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its nineteenth session, the Commission approved preliminary international guidelines on social indicators <sup>1/</sup> and stressed the importance of continued international co-operation and co-ordination of work on social indicators. To this end, the Commission agreed that "the Secretariat should continue to keep national and international work on social indicators under review and submit a summary report on recent developments in the field to the Commission at its twentieth session". <sup>2/</sup>

2. This report is divided into three sections. Section I presents the proposed action for the Commission. Section II reviews national activities concerning social indicators, particularly new publications, the development of data sources and research at the national level. Section III reviews international activities, particularly general social indicator programmes and the development of indicators in specific fields. Two related documents on work on the framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics are also before the Commission, "Progress report on the harmonization of concepts and classifications among specialized fields of social statistics" (E/CN.3/518) and "Methods of collecting, organizing and retrieving social statistics to achieve integration" (E/CN.3/516).

### I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

3. The Commission may wish to comment on the national and international activities described in the present report. It may also wish to request the Secretary-General to continue to monitor national and international developments in the field of social indicators and to submit a report on this topic to the Commission at its twenty-second session.

### II. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

4. Official national work on social indicators is proceeding along several diverse channels. These include (a) the compilation and publication of compendia, (b) the measurement of socio-economic development, (c) social reporting, (d) satellite accounts, (e) social groups and (f) social statistics framework. Each of these topics is discussed below.

#### A. Compendia of social statistics and indicators

5. Many developed countries and a few developing countries have compiled and issued compendia of social statistics and indicators, usually on a periodic basis

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<sup>1/</sup> Social Indicators: Preliminary Guidelines and Illustrative Series, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 63 (United Nations publication, to be issued).

<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5910), para. 105 (c).

but in most cases less often than annually. Some recent examples in the developed countries are:

Canada, Perspective Canada, Statistics Canada, issue No. 1 in 1974, No. 2 in 1977;

Sweden, Living conditions yearbook, 1975, National Central Bureau of Statistics, Swedish with English summary, index and titles;

United Kingdom, Social Trends, Central Statistical Office, annually since 1970;

United States, Social Indicators, issue No. 1 in 1974, issue No. 2 in 1977, United States Department of Commerce, Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards and Bureau of the Census.

Some examples in the developing countries are:

Bahrain, Social Indicators for Bahrain, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1977;

Fiji, Social Indicators for Fiji, Bureau of Statistics, annually since 1973;

Indonesia, Social Indicators, Central Bureau of Statistics, annually since 1971;

Kenya, Social Perspectives, Central Bureau of Statistics, quarterly from June 1976;

Trinidad and Tobago, Social Indicators, Central Statistical Office, 1975.

6. Table 1 of the annex below compares the subject-matter coverage of some of these publications with the coverage of the United Nations preliminary guidelines and illustrative series and the United Nations Compendium of Social Statistics.<sup>3/</sup> There is relatively general agreement on a common core of coverage, including population, education, health and housing, but there are some differences of detail, both in coverage and in organization of the material, and a number of additional topics are covered in some cases. Among the additional topics are environment, which is discussed in two documents before the Commission (E/CN.3/520 and E/CN.3/521), several topics relating to special population groups, such as the elderly and native peoples in the case of Canada, and elements of social participation. The United States publication places unusual emphasis on attitudinal measures of "public perceptions" and on international comparisons, through the inclusion of special sections devoted to these in each chapter. The Swedish compendium has a separate chapter on patterns of food consumption, and the United Kingdom publication includes relatively detailed information on public expenditure and manpower and other resources, in different social fields and over all.

<sup>3/</sup> Social Indicators: Preliminary Guidelines ... and Compendium of Social Statistics, 1977, Statistical Papers, Series K, No. 4 (United Nations publications, to be issued).

7. The objectives of these national publications are to bring together available statistics on social conditions and social policies in a convenient and readily accessible format for non-specialists. This is stated as follows in the introductions to three of the publications noted above:

Bahrain:

"When the State began to adopt the scientific approach in planning for socio-economic development, a clamoring need for accurate social surveys and statistics emerges. Accuracy, visibility and validity of objectives are not assured unless planning is based on facts and information derived from scientific studies and investigations.

"... more attention has been paid to providing planners with accurate data needed for factual planning of projects and programmes of social development. This tendency will no doubt eliminate to a great extent defects such as random decisions, judgements and predictions. It will also help integrating social work programmes within the overall national plans for socio-economic development ...

"... this study provides those concerned with social planning with the information and social indicators which they need to quantify and evaluate their schemes."

United Kingdom:

"This issue of Social Trends /No. 8/ retains the basic objectives of its predecessors ... to bring together a manageable selection of the statistical series relating to social policies and conditions in order to provide a picture of the significant ways in which our society is changing ...

"Only a limited number of the available statistics can be included, and the selection is intended to highlight those data which are thought to provide the essential background information for people concerned with policy formulation and monitoring ...

"Social Trends tries to show its readers where society has got to, and how it is changing; and it tries wherever possible to clarify interactions and changes in relationships. This means providing a wide range of information which, we hope, all sides in the political arena can accept as setting the factual context within which divergent political forces and pressure groups can argue about policy."

United States of America:

"Like its predecessor, Social Indicators 1973, Social Indicators 1976 contains a comprehensive graphic

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collection of statistical data selected and organized to describe current social conditions and trends in the United States.

"... a critical examination of the report should provide a factual basis for independent assessments of our current social conditions and the directions in which we appear to be evolving as a society. These assessments, reflecting the different perspectives of individual readers and analysts, may help to improve public awareness of both the problems and opportunities which are present in our society."

8. Kenya's objectives are much the same, but it has developed a somewhat different dissemination format in Social Perspectives, stated as follows in the first issue (June 1976):

"The primary objective of developing Kenya's system of social statistics is to provide information which will enable policy-makers to undertake the necessary resource allocation to maximize the outcome of their endeavours in enhancing the 'quality of life' of the peoples of Kenya ... This first issue of Social Perspectives brings together some of the information already available. It is, however, only a starting point ... the scope of available information is gradually being broadened and diversified. It is the Bureau's intention to move from the passive description of social change, to the development of indicators of that change ... Future issues ... will set out the information which is thus becoming available ... Social Perspectives has been conceived as a flexible communication link providing up-to-date information on 'quality of life' in Kenya."

9. To summarize, many developed and developing countries are periodically issuing compendia of social statistics and indicators, which stress bringing together available social, demographic and related economic statistics for the purposes of assisting policy makers, planners and the public in defining, measuring and implementing policies and objectives of economic and social planning and of monitoring social conditions and changes.

#### B. Monitoring and assessing socio-economic development

10. In many developing countries there is considerable interest on the part of planning authorities in the development of social indicators for monitoring the rate and impact of socio-economic development and assessing the impact of programmes and policies on social conditions.

11. India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Republic of Korea and Thailand are examples of countries studying the potential usefulness of social indicators for socio-economic monitoring, at the level of projects and more broadly. The necessity in most countries of considerably upgrading and extending the basic data in the

social fields before useful social indicators can be developed for this type of application is well recognized. The Secretary of State for Planning and Regional Development of Morocco has written, "few developing countries have sufficiently elaborate statistics for meeting the requirements of a system of social indicators. While recourse to economic data by planners has become common practice, the use of social data is still little widespread. Even assuming that agreement is reached regarding the definition of a number of social indicators, there remains the difficulty of obtaining statistical series which are long enough and cover many social areas, as well as an integrated system of social statistics." <sup>4/</sup> Similarly, the Director of Economic Studies in Thailand has written, "The most important limit to the usefulness of social indicators is, of course, data availability. Not very much needs to be said on this problem which is common to most developing countries. A few points related to data problems, however, deserve some attention. First, there is an organizational problem. At present, Thailand has some 60 governmental units producing social statistics. Worse still, the fact that there has been no effective co-ordination has resulted in wastage due to unnecessary duplication of efforts. Secondly, there is a common problem of long processing time. The time lags between surveys and the publication of the results in Thailand have been substantial. Thirdly, there are problems concerning the accuracy and consistency of data which again represent common problems in many developing countries. Finally, there is a problem of how additional data required by social indicators can be collected. Collections of specific data certainly represent expensive undertakings." This author sees uses for social indicators in various stages of development planning but is pessimistic on their successful application in project evaluation. For this application, "the present state of the arts contains serious problems which need to be solved before they can be used with confidence". <sup>5/</sup>

12. In Kenya early discussion on social indicators also identified the lack of suitable basic statistics as a serious obstacle to the development of the desired indicators. <sup>6/</sup> The household survey was identified as the most important data collection instrument for overcoming that difficulty, and great emphasis has been placed on the development of an integrated household survey programme to build up the basic data available for social indicators and other purposes. "The Basic Report on the first Integrated Rural Survey (1974-1975) ... contains information on the demographic structure of the rural population; economic description of the

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<sup>4/</sup> Abdelmalek Cherkaoui, "Institutional and organizational problems of using social indicators for planning purposes: the case of planning Morocco", paper presented at the study session on social indicators in developing countries, convened by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and held in Paris, 21-25 November 1977, p. 2.

<sup>5/</sup> Kosit Panpiemras, "Social indicators for national and sectoral planning in Thailand: their uses and limitations", paper presented at the study session on social indicators in developing countries, convened by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and held in Paris, 21-25 November 1977, pp. 12 and 13.

<sup>6/</sup> Kenya, Central Bureau of Statistics, "Towards a social perspective: a statistical appraisal", Kenya Statistical Digest, vol. 13, No. 3 (September 1975), pp. 5-9.



holding and its assets; household income, expenditure and consumption; farm production, its costs and inputs; and income from non-agricultural activities ... Information was also collected on quality of housing and on accessibility to the various social amenities and water supply during the wet and dry seasons." Additional surveys in other fields have been undertaken within the context of the National Integrated Sample Survey Programme, covering fertility, literacy, nutrition and non-farm activities, and the handicapped. Consideration is also being given to collecting detailed information on children under care, persons on probation, juvenile delinquency, crime, the urban poor and housing in the urban areas. 7/

13. The importance of monitoring and assessing socio-economic development has also been stressed by at least one aid-giving agency with special emphasis on indicators concerning five topics: "To assure that development assistance is increasingly concentrated in 'countries which will make effective use of such assistance to help the poor to a better life', section 102 (d) of the United States Foreign Assistance Act calls for:

The establishment of 'appropriate criteria to assess the commitment and progress of countries' in meeting key development objectives, as summarized in section 102 (c) (aimed at increasing substantially the participation of the poor in development);

Encouraging the adoption of similar criteria by international development organizations in which the United States participates; and

Selecting these criteria according to their value in assessing the efforts of countries to:

Increase agricultural productivity per unit of land;

Reduce infant mortality;

Control population growth;

Promote greater equality of income distribution;

Reduce rates of unemployment and underemployment." 8/

#### C. Social reporting and analysis

14. Another topic closely related to the development of social indicators is social reporting, which is usually defined explicitly in terms of policy formulation and analysis. A report prepared by the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, states, "the major difference between social indicator reports and social surveys,

7/ Kenya, Central Bureau of Statistics, "Household surveys and social statistics in Kenya", paper presented at the study session on social indicators in developing countries, convened by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and held in Paris, 21-25 November 1977, pp. 7-11.

8/ United States Agency for International Development, Socio-economic Performance Criteria for Development (Washington, D.C., February 1977), p. i. /...

on the one hand, and social reports, on the other, hinges on the diagnostics and policy analysis content of the latter. Social reports go beyond the display and description of quantitative measures of socio-economic conditions and trends. They are intended to provide insight into the workings of the social system, the causal factors and interrelationships in a way that leads to policy conclusions. Reports of this genre also provide, more explicitly than documents devoted to data, for qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. While a major purpose of social reporting is to provide an analysis for policy, such reports may be broadly based and national in scope, or focused on a particular policy area such as sectoral reports on health or education, or functional reports on poverty or employment." 9/

15. Social and Cultural Report, a widely-circulated governmental social report from the Netherlands, was published by the Social and Cultural Planning Office in 1974 and 1976, with complete English translations. The 1976 issue covers nine "fields of social and cultural welfare" and three intersectoral studies. The Report mobilizes a wealth of statistics as a basis for discussion and analysis, but the main thrust is analytical, not statistical. It has relied particularly on the 1974 survey of living conditions, a multisubject household survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics. There are few comparable, comprehensive, periodic social reports in other countries, but there are many ad hoc governmental publications on social and economic development and frequent periodic reports in specific fields such as health, education, labour and housing.

16. There is also considerable non-governmental interest at the national level in social reporting. In 1975 the Development Academy of the Philippines, Manila, produced Measuring the Quality of Life: Philippine Social Indicators, and in the Federal Republic of Germany there is a large project to develop a "system of socio-political concerns and indicators (SPES)" at Goethe University, Frankfurt. This project has published a lengthy report, Living Conditions in the Federal Republic: Social Change and Social Welfare. 10/

17. Finally, at the level of basic research, social scientists are interested in the development of social indicators as part of the development of basic theory in the field. Two social scientists in the United States have written, "The interest in social indicators has stimulated a revival of interest in quantitative, comparative, social analysis, in the analysis of social change, in conceptual and measurement work on such topics as prejudice, and learning, and in the development of models of social processes ... It is apparent that many different types of work go on under the rubric of social indicators. What is important is that the field be seen as an arena for long-term development, as an effort of social scientists to push forward developments in concepts and in methodology that promise payoffs to both science and public policy." 11/

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9/ "Social reporting and development" in Social Reports: Their Contribution to Integrated Development Planning (SOA/ESDP/1976/1), report of a seminar held at Saint-Pierre, Italy, 22-30 April 1976, vol. 1, p. 17.

10/ Wolfgang Zapf, ed. (Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 1977). In German.

11/ E. B. Sheldon and R. Parke, "Social indicators", Science, vol. 188 (16 May 1975), p. 698.

D. Satellite accounts to the national accounts and balances

18. At its nineteenth session, the Commission considered a report entitled "The feasibility of welfare-oriented measures to complement the national accounts and balances" (E/CN.3/477) and approved its publication. <sup>12/</sup> This report, inter alia, considered ways in which the national accounts and balances could serve as a starting point for welfare measurement. This approach has been pursued particularly by France, but also by the Netherlands in the field of health.

19. In France, experience in the development of accounts of trade, transportation and agriculture "made clear the need to give a degree of independence to the studies on how to develop and refine the national accounts in certain sectors, and also the desirability of keeping them linked with the other national accounts so as to be able to include coherent data on the over-all economy in an economic analysis of these sectors and also to improve the quality of the outline accounts for these sectors in the central framework of the national accounts." On the basis of this experience, satellite accounts have been developed in several of the social fields, mainly housing, health, social protection and education. The rationale for these accounts in the social field is similar to that underlying some of the early United Nations work on a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics in relation to national accounts. "The task of planning a vast and fully integrated system of economic and social statistics on the model of the national accounts would be too ambitious and impracticable. It would seem preferable to develop specialized statistical systems corresponding to the different areas of social concern ... In each particular sector it is important to bring together coherent monetary and non-monetary data." <sup>13/</sup> In France, this work is seen as complementary to work on social indicators, which it is argued can help assess "results" of action in a given field but are too limited in coverage and unsystematic in organization to provide a basis for statistical development.

E. Social or client groups

20. In the United Kingdom, there has been work on the concept of "social groups", that is, categories of the population defined according to one or a combination of socio-economic characteristics which are seen as being of particular importance for policy planning and management and for identifying socio-economic problems. Although the United Kingdom's Social Trends continues to be organized primarily in terms of subject-matter fields, the 1977 issue contains two articles which deal explicitly and comprehensively with particular social groups, i.e. persons aged 15-25 and low-income households; it also contains statistical sections devoted to children, the elderly and ethnic minorities.

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<sup>12/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5910), para. 29 (a). The report was issued as The Feasibility of Welfare-oriented Measures to Supplement the National Accounts and Balances: a Technical Report (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.XVII.12).

<sup>13/</sup> Philippe Pommier, "French experience with satellite accounts; are such accounts useful in low-income countries?", paper presented at the study session on social indicators in developing countries, convened by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and held in Paris, 21-25 November 1977, pp. 2, 3.

21. The social group as a focus for development and application of social statistics was singled out by the United Kingdom Central Policy Review Staff in a report that states, "One way of studying how policies interact in practice is to select a specific group of people and assess how their situation and their needs are affected by all the policies which impinge on them ... an approach of this kind could reveal not only where policies conflict or leave gaps, but also whether services - however well devised in principle - are in practice satisfactorily delivered to particular clients." <sup>14/</sup> The Review Staff elaborated this approach in its 1977 report. <sup>15/</sup>

#### F. Social statistics framework

22. In the United States, work is being pursued on social indicators "which are considered to reflect some important aspect of social conditions and trends" and on a framework for social statistics. The principal objectives of work on a framework are seen as, first, "to establish a detailed set of common concepts, definitions, classifications and principles of disaggregation covering the units of observation and the variables of interest to be surveyed at mid-decade. Second, using the results of the mid-decade effort as a base line body of information /to/ carry out a detailed examination of all of the major social survey instruments with a view toward extending the use of the common framework as widely as is feasible. The ultimate goal of these two phases of the operation would be to establish a comprehensive framework for the comparative analysis of data, at the lowest level of aggregation consistent with disclosure restrictions, from all of the major data collection efforts." <sup>16/</sup> This approach emphasizes, as did the Commission at its nineteenth session, the importance and usefulness of harmonizing and co-ordinating concepts, classifications and definitions in the social, demographic and related economic fields. A progress report on this subject is also before the Commission (E/CN.3/518).

### III. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

23. At the international level, there is ongoing work of two types concerning social indicators. These are general developmental and applied programmes and development of indicators in specific fields.

#### A. General programmes

24. General programmes concerned with the development and dissemination of social indicators and statistics have been under way for several years in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the European Community, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations.

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<sup>14/</sup> A Joint Framework for Social Policies (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975), p. 10.

<sup>15/</sup> Population and the Social Services, (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977).

<sup>16/</sup> United States Office of Management and Budget, "Social indicators and social accounts; a development strategy", Statistical Reporter (May 1977), p. 357. /...

25. In 1976 CMEA adopted "The system of basic indicators for social statistics" as a basis for further work on social indicators and related statistics. <sup>17/</sup> The purpose of this work is to elaborate a system of indicators and methods for their calculation which can be applied to two objectives: the attainment of comparability of data on social phenomena and processes needed for co-ordination of socio-economic policy in CMEA countries; and facilitation of the development of indicators in individual countries. The methods to be used are based on systematization of data on social phenomena and processes which would ensure a comprehensive approach to studying and defining social conditions. Linkages between social and economic statistics are to be studied further and international comparisons are to be prepared. Future work will also emphasize classification of the population by socio-economic classes and groups and analysis of interrelationships.

26. The European Community has also undertaken a programme aimed at selecting and defining a number of social indicators oriented towards living conditions and the circumstances which underlie them, and at improving the necessary basic statistics, particularly those most closely related to the Community's social policies. Social statistics have been issued annually in Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Community. <sup>18/</sup> The first issue of a new periodical, Social Indicators of the European Community, 1960-1975, appeared in late 1977. It presented 66 tables of comparable indicators for the Community's members. In addition, the Community is sponsoring, on a trial basis, a small, one-time survey on public attitudes towards health and housing, which may provide an additional source of data for social indicators in those fields.

27. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched a development programme for social indicators in 1970. The first phase of this work was to delineate the social concerns to which social indicators should be addressed. This phase was completed in 1973 with the publication of a list of 24 social concerns approved by the member countries of OECD. <sup>19/</sup> The list focuses on defining major aspects of individuals' well-being, in some cases in perceptual or attitudinal terms, for which it would be desirable to have statistical indicators, and which it was agreed are of present or potential interest to Governments. The OECD is now engaged in formulating series of social indicators which could be used to monitor social concerns. Emphasis is being given to delineating the series that are conceptually closest to the defined social concerns, even where it is anticipated that these may require new efforts in data collection and analysis.

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<sup>17/</sup> Moscow, December 1976 (mimeo). Available in Russian and English.

<sup>18/</sup> Commission of the European Communities (Brussels-Luxembourg). The statistical information is contained in section D, "The development of the social situation in figures (with observations)".

<sup>19/</sup> List of Social Concerns Common to Most OECD Countries, Social Indicator Programme, vol. 1, Manpower and Social Affairs Directorate (Paris, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1973).

Progress reports on this phase of the work were issued in 1976, 1977 and 1978. 20/ Technical studies on the specification and development of social indicators in many of the areas of social concern covered by the List of Social Concerns ... were completed in 1978, as a series of 15 small, technical working group studies, called Common Development Efforts. Proposals for the third phase of the programme were prepared in 1978. In addition to this work, which is geared to the developed country members of OECD, the Development Centre of OECD started a research project on social indicators in developing countries in 1976 and convened a study session on this topic. 21/

28. The Statistical Office of the United Nations carried out work on fields of social concern and social indicators within the context of work on the integration of social, demographic and related economic statistics. At its nineteenth session, the Statistical Commission approved for publication Social Indicators: Preliminary Guidelines and Illustrative Series (see para. 1 above). This publication is designed to provide a review of concepts of social indicators which have been advanced in national and international work and of their present stage of development, and to show how social indicators may be formulated in parallel with the development of a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics. The preliminary guidelines and illustrative series furnish a flexible and evolutionary outline, subject to continuing refinement as statistical and conceptual development proceeds, for the formulation and selection of measures pertaining to the fields of social concern and their components which were first set out, in the work of the United Nations, in Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics. 22/ The approach to social indicators which is illustrated in the preliminary guidelines links their development closely to the development and integration of social and demographic statistics, and to the measurement and assessment of living conditions and the circumstances and factors which influence them. This approach is a continuation and expansion of the approach taken in two early United Nations reports on levels of living. 23/ The United Nations preliminary guidelines particularly emphasize that the long-term effectiveness and soundness of social indicators can be improved if they are

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20/ Measuring Social Well-being: A Progress Report on the Development of Social Indicators (Paris, OECD, 1976); 1976 Progress Report on Phase II, Plan for Future Activities (Paris, OECD, 1977); Working Party on Social Indicators, OECD, "1977 progress report on phase II", draft (Paris, February 1978).

21/ A report of the session, held in Paris, 21-25 November 1977, is in preparation.

22/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.XVII.8.

23/ Report on International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living (United Nations publication, Sales No. 54.IV.5); and International Definition and Measurement of Levels of Living; an Interim Guide (United Nations publication, Sales No. 61.IV.7). This work was undertaken pursuant to the promotion of "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as set forth in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations.

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seen in the context of a framework for integration, in addition to their being founded, as they must be, on reliable, comprehensive bodies of basic statistics.

29. The United Nations also publishes periodically Compendium of Social Statistics, Statistical Papers, Series K. The 1977 edition will be issued shortly. It was prepared with substantial assistance from the specialized agencies and other statistical sources and is divided into four parts: estimates and projections for the world and regions; key series for countries; general series for countries; and general series for cities or urban agglomerations. The 1977 Compendium is nearly 2,000 pages in length and is by far the most detailed and comprehensive international sourcebook of social, demographic and related economic statistics ever published, reflecting the substantial improvements that have been made in the collection of basic statistics in these fields, particularly in the developing countries, since the last issue of the Compendium. 24/

30. The subject-matter coverage of the social indicator studies of the United Nations, CMEA, the European Community and OECD is shown in table 2 of the annex to the present report. The subject-matter coverage of the United Nations Compendium of Social Statistics is shown in table 1, along with the coverage of seven national publications. In addition, the Inter-American Statistical Institute issues an annual publication of social statistics 25/ and is preparing a programme of work on social indicators.

31. Various United Nations agencies are also concerned with the applications of indicators. The World Bank annually publishes World Bank Atlas of economic and social indicators. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development is studying the measurement of progress at the local level, the use of indicators in a unified approach to development and the improvement of measures of development generally. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is sponsoring a series of papers and workshops on the application of socio-economic indicators in development planning. 26/

#### B. Development of indicators in specific fields

32. The divisions of the United Nations specialized agencies responsible for statistics and for analytical and planning studies are concerned with developing improved indicators in their fields of interest and responsibility, as part of their regular programmes for the development of statistical concepts and methods, technical co-operation in statistics and international dissemination of statistics.

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24/ Compendium of Social Statistics, 1967 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 67.XVII.9).

25/ América en Cifras: Situación Social (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Statistical Institute). Published semi-annually in Spanish.

26/ See the report of one of the workshops, The Use of Socio-economic Indicators in Development Planning (Paris, UNESCO, 1976).

33. The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned with the improvement of measures of health status and access to health services, particularly at the primary health-care level in developing countries. In co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WHO is working to improve statistics and indicators of nutrition and malnutrition.

34. In 1978, FAO published Fourth World Food Survey. Combined with other current information including that published periodically in the FAO Review of Food Consumption Surveys, it will provide indicators for monitoring levels, trends and adequacy of food consumption and the related nutritional status of socially disadvantaged groups in individual countries. FAO is also interested in improved measurement of employment and under-utilization of labour in agriculture and of women's participation in agricultural production.

35. UNESCO is concerned with the improvement of statistics and indicators on adult education, literacy, educational finance, internal efficiency and the utilization of educational resources, and culture and communications.

36. The International Labour Office (ILO) is concerned with methods to better measure employment, unemployment and underemployment. In this connexion, it has sponsored a series of research projects, particularly in South-East Asia, on the improvement of concepts, techniques and methods of data collection in this field. 27/ In addition, ILO is studying the development of indicators of basic needs, pursuant to the Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action adopted by the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress, and the International Division of Labour. 28/

37. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is interested in developing a summary selection of environmental indicators concerned with assessing the environmental component of the human quality of life. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is promoting the improvement of statistics and indicators of children and youth through its technical co-operation programme and is interested in developing improved measures of access to basic services, such as basic health services.

38. In regional work, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has established a priority programme on social statistics and indicators. It includes the preparation of indicators based on improved and consolidated national household survey capabilities and the application of common methodological criteria for the measurement of demographic characteristics, employment, education, basic needs, access to services, income and expenditure and income distribution.

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27/ See, for example, International Labour Office, Bureau of Statistics, "Recent experience in labour force sample surveys in developing countries", results of the regional seminar of the Association of South-East Asian Nations held at Jakarta, 26 July-3 August 1977 (Geneva, 1977), mimeo.

28/ Meeting Basic Needs: Strategies for Eradicating Mass Poverty and Unemployment (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1977).



Annex

TABLE 1. SUBJECT-MATTER COVERAGE OF SELECTED COMPENDIA OF SOCIAL STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

United Nations preliminary guide-lines	Canada	Sweden	United Kingdom	United States of America	Fiji	Indonesia	Trinidad and Tobago	United Nations Compendium of Social Statistics
Population	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family formation, families and households	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning and educational services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Earning activities and the inactive	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Distribution of income, consumption and accumulation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social security and welfare services		X	X	X		X		X
Health, health services and nutrition	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Housing and its environment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public order and safety	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Time-use				X				
Leisure and culture	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Social stratification and mobility				X				X

TABLE 1 (continued)

Additional topics

United Nations preliminary guidelines	Canada	Sweden	United Kingdom	United States of America	Fiji	Indonesia	Trinidad and Tobago	United Nations Compendium of Social Statistics
The older Canadians		Politics	Social groups		Religion			Agricultural population, resources and output
Urban profiles		Social-political activity	Resources and expenditure		Miscellaneous			Refugees
Quality of the environment			Environment					Cities or urban agglomerations
Bilingualism			Participation					
Native peoples								

Source: See paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report.

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TABLE 2. SUBJECT-MATTER COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
A. <u>Population</u>			
1. Size, structure and changes in population	National demographic processes and population	Demography	-
2. Geographic distribution of population and changes in distribution	Internal migration	Population density and concentration	-
B. <u>Families and households</u>			
1. Family formation and stability	Families (households)	Marrriages, divorces and illegitimate births	Primary social attachments
2. Families and households			
C. <u>Learning and educational services</u>			
1. Educational attainments and educational achievements of the population	School education including graduates from higher institutions and specialized secondary schools	Degree of scholarization	The attainment, maintenance and development by indi- viduals of basic and further knowledge, skills and values necessary for their indi- vidual development and successful functioning as citizens in their society.

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
C. <u>Learning and educational services</u> (continued)			
2. Use and distribution of educational services	Participation of population in education of different types and levels; pre-school attendance; process of skill improvement	School population by level	The organized opportunities available to individuals to acquire, maintain and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their individual development and their successful functioning as citizens in their society, and the propensity of individuals to use these organised opportunities
3. Inputs, outputs and performance of educational services	Expenditures on education	Educational expenditure by general government	-
4.	-	-	The individual's satisfaction with the process of individual development through learning while he is in the process
5.	-	-	The maintenance and development of cultural heritage relative to its positive contribution to the well-being of the members of various social groups

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
<u>D. Earning activities and the inactive</u>			
1. Labour force participation	Economically active population	Activity rates and structure of activity	The availability of gainful employment for those who desire it
2. Employment opportunities and mobility	Employment and un- employment	Incomes by industry	The quality of working life: earnings and fringe benefits
3. Employment compensation	Wages	Working life	The quality of working life: fringe benefits; working conditions; employment time, employment-related time and paid holidays; the flexibility of patterns of working time
4. Working conditions	a/	Personal assessment of working conditions	Individual satis- faction with the experience of working life
5. Availability and performance of manpower services	-	-	-
6.	-	-	-

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	<u>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</u> <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
E. <u>Distribution of income, consumption and accumulation</u>			
1. Level and growth of household income and accumulation	Income, distribution and property of population	National disposable income	Personal income and wealth
2. Level and growth of consumption	Consumption	Standard of living	-
3. Inequality and redistribution of income and consumption	Structure of consumption and income of population	-	Number of individuals experiencing material deprivation
4. -	-	-	The consumer's position in society
F. <u>Social security and welfare services</u>			
1. Scope of protection against loss of income and other hazards	e/	Social protection	The protection of individuals and families against economic hazards: (a) the extent to which individuals and families perceive themselves as secure against adverse changes in their economic status

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	<u>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</u> <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
F. <u>Social security and welfare services</u> (continued)			
2. Use and magnitude of protection against loss of income and other hazards	a/	Social protection	(b) the extent to which individuals and families obtain insurance or other compensation for adverse changes in their economic status
G. <u>Health, health services and nutrition</u>			
1. State of health	State of health	Health	The probability of a healthy life through all stages of the life cycle
(a) Mortality and length of life			(a) Length of life
(b) Morbidity and disabilities			(b) Healthfulness of life
2. Availability, use and performance of health services	Medical care	Medical services and personnel	The impact of health impairments on individuals
3. Nutrition	Consumption of foodstuffs and their composition	Food and tobacco consumption	

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations Preliminary Guidelines	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance System of Basic Indicators	European Community Social Indicators	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development List of Social Concerns
<u>H. Housing and its environment</u>			
1. Supply, characteristics and distribution of housing	Housing stock, conditions and construction	Dwelling stock, char- acteristics and construction	Housing conditions: indoor space and amenities
2. Tenure of and outlays on housing	-	Construction costs and rents	Access to housing and security of tenure
3. Public housing assistance	-	-	-
4. State of the housing environment <u>b/</u>	a/	-	Housing conditions: outdoor space
<u>I. Public order and safety</u>			
1. Frequency and severity of offenses and victimization	a/	-	Actual victimization of individuals
2. -	-	-	Perceived threat of victimization
3. Characteristics and treatment of offenders	a/	-	Administration of Justice
4. -	-	-	Extent of confidence in the administration of justice
5. Institutions and personnel	a/	-	-



TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations <u>Preliminary Guidelines</u>	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance <u>System of Basic Indicators</u>	European Community <u>Social Indicators</u>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
<u>J. Time-use</u>			
1. Use of time (activities)	Time budget of the population <sup>b/</sup>	-	The availability of effective choices for the use of time
<u>K. Leisure and culture</u>			
1. Use of leisure	Cultural activities, physical culture, tourism and leisure <sup>c/</sup>	-	The time available for personal deve- lopment, family and social obligations, and social parti- cipation
2. Availability and use of leisure-time facilities	-	-	The accessibility and quality of leisure-time opportunities
<u>L. Social stratification and mobility</u>			
1. Social stratification	Class composition of society <sup>c/</sup> and distribution of the active population by social groups	-	The degree of inequality among social strata and the position of disadvantaged groups
2. Intragenerational mobility	Distribution of basic social groups by levels of education	-	The extent of oppor- tunity for social mobility
3. Intergenerational mobility	Distribution of social groups by social origin	-	-
4. -	<sup>a/</sup>	-	The extent of oppor- tunity for partici- pation in institutions

TABLE 2 (continued)

United Nations Preliminary Guidelines	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance System of Basic Indicators	European Community Social Indicators	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <u>List of Social Concerns</u>
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M. Other fields

1. - - - Social environment:  
secondary social  
attachments
2. b/ a/ Climate The natural envi-  
ronment and envi-  
ronmental nuisances

Sources:

Social Indicators: Preliminary Guidelines and Illustrative Series (United Nations publication, to be issued).  
 Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, "The system of basic indicators for social statistics", Moscow, December 1976, mimeo. Available in Russian and English.  
 Statistical Office of the European Communities, Social Indicators of the European Community, 1960-1975 (Luxembourg, 1977).  
 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Measuring Social Well-Being (Paris, 1976), part four.

Notes:

- A dash (-) indicates the subject is not covered.
- a/ Work in this area is to be undertaken as soon as possible.
  - b/ A programme of environmental statistics including a human settlements component is being developed by the Statistical Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat.
  - c/ Detailed specification of indicators for this subject has not yet been completed.