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REGIONAL CONFERENCES OF STATISTICIANS AND SIMILAR BODIES

Report of the Secretary-General*

SUMMARY

The present document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the statistical activities of the regional commissions and the Inter-American Statistical Institute since the nineteenth session of the Commission, in November 1976. It covers the work of the Economic Commission for Europe (paras. 2-25), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (paras. 26-64), the Economic Commission for Latin America (paras. 65-88), the Economic Commission for Africa (paras. 89-106), the Economic Commission for Western Asia (paras. 107-114) and the Inter-American Statistical Institute (paras. 115-128).

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

1. At the nineteenth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General entitled "Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies" (E/CN.3/496 and Corr.1 and Add.1). 1/ The present document is the corresponding report on the statistical work done since the nineteenth session. A progress report on the statistical work of the specialized agencies (E/CN.3/530) and a report on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations (E/CN.3/531) are also before the Commission.

1/ For a summary of the discussion in the Commission, see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5910), paras. 192-194.

I. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

A. Conference of European Statisticians

2. The Conference of European Statisticians held its twenty-fifth session in June 1977 (see ECE/CES/10) and the twenty-sixth session is scheduled for June 1978. The main developments in the Conference's work during the programme years 1976/77 and 1977/78 are described below.

1. Organizational and operational subjects

3. The Working Party on Electronic Data Processing met in February 1977 and April 1978 and discussed, as main subjects, data base management, integrated statistical information systems, computer aspects of the use of registers in statistical offices, automated data banks, generalized computer programmes and computing in national statistical services beyond 1980.

4. The Conference agreed to include in its work programme the Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS) seminars held at the Computing Research Centre at Bratislava. The ISIS seminar held in September 1977 considered selected problems connected with the design and development of computerized statistical information systems and drew up proposals for a long-term co-operative research programme.

5. A seminar on statistical services in 10 years' time was held at Washington, D.C., in March 1977. The seminar recommended further study of 10 topics, and arrangements were made for the preparation of papers on some of these topics for consideration at plenary sessions of the Conference. A meeting on problems relating to household surveys was also held in March 1978 to discuss methods of improving the conduct of such surveys and the presentation of results.

2. Economic statistics

6. The Conference continued to co-operate in the work of the Statistical Commission on the extension and further development of the systems of national accounts and balances. A meeting of the Working Party on National Accounts and Balances was held in February 1978 to review the implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) and to consider the needs for possible improvements of the systems and for further work on links between them.

7. Meetings were held on public sector statistics and on statistics of producer prices, and a meeting on statistics of consumer prices will be held in May 1978 jointly with the International Labour Office. Work continued on a study of national accounts and balances for the co-ordination of economic statistics. The Conference approved a systematic programme of international comparisons of basic economic aggregates.

8. Work continued on the preparation of a conversion key between the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and the Standard Foreign Trade Classification of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

9. The Conference continued to co-operate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Committee on Agricultural Problems of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in developing agricultural statistics. A meeting was held on food consumption surveys at which the adoption of a broader approach and the preparation by FAO of a draft revised programme of food consumption and nutritive statistics was recommended. Work continued on a European handbook of economic accounts for agriculture.

10. The Conference continued to co-operate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the senior advisers to ECE Governments on science and technology. A meeting on the measurement of international technology flows was held in February 1977, and a questionnaire will be issued shortly asking for information or indicators that could be used for measuring transfers of technology.

11. A meeting on general energy statistics was held in October 1976, at which agreement was reached on the format and contents of an over-all energy balance-sheet to be used for the collection of data on a trial basis. An experimental collection of data on over-all energy balances in accordance with the agreed format has been carried out, and a further meeting to review the results is scheduled for 1978/79.

3. Social and demographic statistics

12. The Conference continued to participate in the development of a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics (FSDS). Groups of rapporteurs are working on links among the fields covered by FSDS, links between FSDS and the systems of national accounts and balances and the analytical usefulness of the data series studied in the demographic, education and manpower chapters of Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics. 2/ Preparatory work has started for the seventh session of the working party, which is scheduled to be held in the last quarters of 1978 to consider various topics relating to the development and progressive implementation of the framework.

13. The Conference continued to co-operate with the World Health Organization (WHO) on health statistics, with UNESCO on statistics of education and of culture and with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on manpower statistics. A meeting on health statistics was held jointly with WHO in October 1976, and a preliminary study on the scope and coverage of a framework for a system of cultural statistics prepared by UNESCO was circulated for comments.

14. In the demographic field, several meetings were held to review the implementation of the European recommendations for the 1970 population and housing censuses and to draw up revised recommendations for the 1980 population and housing censuses in the ECE region (within the framework of the world programme

2/ United Nations publication Sales No. E.74.XVII.8.

in this field); the ECE programme for the 1980 censuses will be published shortly. A questionnaire has also been issued to collect more up-to-date and additional data on international migration for the further analysis of differences between data reported by sending and receiving countries; the results of this analysis will be considered at a meeting to be held in 1978/79.

4. Environment and related statistics

15. The Conference continued to participate in the work of the Statistical Commission on the development of environment statistics by convening a meeting in January 1978 jointly with the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental Problems. The main topics discussed were current national practices and problems in this field and concepts, definitions and classifications for use in particular areas of environment statistics, i.e. statistics on pollution and related quality aspects of environmental media, statistics on investments for environmental protection and the use of concepts of environmental stress as one approach to the development of frameworks for environment statistics.

16. Arrangements are being made to hold a consultation among secretariats of international organizations on their work on the statistics of regions within countries with a view to promoting closer co-operation in this field. The Conference has agreed to include a project on statistics of land use in its programme of work; the scope and contents of this project and the methods of work to be used will be considered at the plenary session in June 1978.

B. Statistical work of the principal subsidiary bodies of ECE

17. The Group of Experts on Transport Statistics of the Inland Transport Committee of ECE met in December 1977. The main subjects discussed were price and quantity indices in the field of transport, nomenclatures and classification of goods and services, statistics concerning the use of energy in transport, the Annual Bulletin of Transport Statistics for Europe, terms and definitions of transport statistics, results of the 1975 censuses and the preparations for the 1980 censuses of road traffic on main international traffic arteries, and road traffic accident statistics. The Group of Experts agreed that the publication of "Quarterly transport statistics for Europe", which had only limited distribution, should be suspended after the end of 1977.

18. The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest and Forest Products and Statistics of the Timber Committee of ECE and the European Forestry Commission of FAO held its session in May/June 1977. The main items discussed were cost and price statistics relating to forest products, conversion factors, labour statistics, roundwood supply estimation, environmental benefits, taxation, collection and dissemination of statistics and surveys of the capacity and structure of the wood-processing industries.

19. The Group of Experts on Coal Statistics of the Coal Committee of ECE met in June 1977. The main subjects discussed were internationally comparable measurements of productivity; international definitions, standards and classifications

of solid fuels; statistical methods of accounting for labour consumption in coal mining; statistical bulletins, capital formation and cost of production and number and type of shifts worked per 100 tons of coal produced.

20. The Group of Experts on Gas Statistics and Forecasting Problems of the Committee on Gas of ECE held its session in November 1977. The Group of Experts considered the activities of the Sub-Committee on Statistics on the System of Units of the International Gas Union; statistical bulletins; collection of data on facilities for underground gas storage, liquefied natural gas storage and gas transport mains; questions arising from the gradual transition to the International System of Units (SI Units); international comparison of ratios within the gas industry; harmonization of questionnaires on gas statistics; technical problems related to the over-all balance sheets of energy and problems arising in the field of forecasting gas demand.

21. During the period under review, statistical issues were also considered directly by other principal subsidiary bodies of ECE, namely, by the Steel Committee, the Committee on Electric Power, the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning and the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts on Engineering Industries. These and other principal subsidiary bodies were also informed of the relevant statistical work of the Conference and the ECE secretariat.

22. At the request of ECE at its thirty-second session in 1977, the principal subsidiary bodies concerned considered the situation regarding their statistical bulletins with a view to rationalizing and improving the flow of information.

23. The Statistical Division prepared an ad hoc publication entitled "A statistical survey of the housing situation in ~~the~~ ECE countries around 1970",* containing data on population, households, living quarters and buildings, derived from the relevant national censuses taken around 1970, 1960 and 1950.

C. Statistical collection, compilation and analysis

24. An important task of the Statistical Division is the preparation of statistical material needed by other divisions of the ECE secretariat for research purposes, mainly for the Economic Surveys and Bulletins. To accomplish this task, several key statistical series are regularly collected and stored in a computerized data base. An important project related to this activity is the preparation of historical statistics, covering several series on a comparable basis for all the countries of the ECE region. The first fields covered will be national accounts and balances and energy, on which work has already started.

25. A set of standardized input-output tables of ECE countries, for years around 1965, was published in 1977. Another set, for years around 1970, is under preparation, and it is planned to publish it in 1980/81.

* E/F/R.78.II.E.5
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II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

26. At its second session, in December 1976, the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) recommended five priority areas of attention, namely, improvement of the household survey capabilities of member countries, improvement of statistics needed for rural development, improvement and expansion of facilities for training of statistical personnel in the countries of the region, preparation for the 1980 round of population and housing censuses and promotion of electronic data processing. During the period under review, therefore, statistical activities in the ESCAP region were specifically focused on these priority areas while normal activities were maintained in other socio-economic data fields. With regard to organizing technical meetings, the lack of financial support from donor agencies and countries persisted, although there was some reprieve through ad hoc support from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) and one or two developed countries.

A. Statistical collection, compilation and analysis

27. The Statistics Division's project of collecting tapes containing data from national population and housing censuses and other demographic surveys continued, and was extended to tapes containing data from fertility surveys that were undertaken as part of the World Fertility Survey programme. So far data sets have been acquired from several countries in respect of their censuses and from one country in respect of its fertility survey.

28. The position with regard to the regular collection and dissemination of regional information through publications is described below.

29. Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific. The 1975 and 1976 issues were released and the 1977 issue is in press.

30. Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics for Asia and the Pacific were issued regularly. Special feature articles published in various issues were "Simplified models of interprovincial migration; the case of the Republic of Korea" (December 1974); "The potentialities of the SNA for analysis and policy-making" (June 1975); "Statistics for planning and implementing rural development - the Indian experience" (December 1976).

31. Statistical Indicators for Asia and the Pacific. The coverage and content are continually being enlarged in this quarterly publication.

32. Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific. The 1971, 1972 and 1973 issues were released and the 1974 issue is in press.

33. Handbook on Cereal and Fertilizer Statistics for Asia and the Pacific, 1977. This ad hoc publication is in preparation.

34. Statistical Newsletter. The quarterly periodicity of this publication was resumed with the December 1976 issue and has since been maintained.

35. Sample Surveys in the ESCAP Region. The thirteenth annual issue of this report, pertaining to 1975, was released. This report included particulars on 75 sample surveys conducted in 18 countries and a listing of 120 repetitive surveys, the details of most of which had been given in earlier reports. The fourteenth report, pertaining to 1976, is in preparation for release around mid-1978.

B. Statistical methods and standards

36. Evaluative methodological studies on compilation of national accounts were undertaken for a number of countries of the region. The regional programme on vital statistics, which began late in 1976 with the appointment of a regional adviser, resulted in studies on vital registration systems in a number of countries. The studies were designed to assist countries in improving the administration, coverage and compilation of data relating to vital events and their analysis.

37. Evaluative studies were also undertaken on social and demographic statistics and social indicators until February 1978, when the expert responsible for the project completed his assignment with ESCAP. It is expected that an expert on demographic and social statistics will be appointed in the near future in order to continue the work, with emphasis on devising methods for developing socio-economic indicators from the analysis of data from censuses and surveys.

38. In connexion with the 1980 round of population and housing censuses, the Asian and Pacific Recommendations for the 1980 Censuses of Population and Housing was published and the regional adviser on population and housing censuses has been promoting their adoption for use in the forthcoming round of national censuses.

39. The study on commodity balances in six countries of the region, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand, a joint project of ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank, FAO and the Institute of Developing Economies (Tokyo) was completed with the publication of a Manual on the Compilation of Commodity Balances in June 1977.

40. The joint ESCAP/World Bank project on household survey data on income distribution, which was initiated in 1975, is expected to culminate in a report to be released in 1978. ESCAP intends to do further work in this field after this report becomes available.

41. In collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and the United Nations Environment Programme, exploratory work began on the development of environment statistics. Once guidelines have been formulated, ESCAP intends to seek consultancy services on the subject in order eventually to collect and publish statistics of the environment most appropriate to the region.

42. ESCAP has evolved a work programme that includes meetings, advisory services and methodological studies in two priority areas for the region, namely, household survey capability and statistics for rural development.

C. Statistics development

43. During the period under review, the second session of the Committee on Statistics was held at Tehran in December 1976. The Committee reviewed the statistics development activities in the countries of the ESCAP region, the activities of the ESCAP secretariat in the development of statistics and the work of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific known at that time as the Asian Statistical Institute. Particular attention was paid to the implementation of recommendations made at the first session of the Committee. The Committee considered the reports of its various subsidiary bodies during the preceding two years: the Working Group on Current Demographic Statistics (June 1975), the Ad Hoc Working Group of Statistical Experts (October 1975), the Workshop on Shippers' Co-operation: economic statistics of shipping (July 1976) and the Expert Group on ESCAP/ADB Commodity Balances Project (November 1976).

44. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group on Current Demographic Statistics on the appropriate methods for the improvement in quality and coverage of demographic statistics, which were increasingly required for development planning purposes. It was suggested that the secretariat compile an inventory of the various types of demographic sample surveys taken in the region. The Committee also endorsed the Group's recommendation for a simplified adaptation of the framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics (FSDS) for use in the developing countries.

45. The Committee's discussions of the report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts centred, among other things, on the terms of reference of the Committee and on an examination of the basic purposes of the Group itself, which had been established to ensure and maintain the cohesion of the Committee's programme. The Committee felt that the Working Group served a very useful purpose and should meet again in 1977; the secretariat was to prepare an evaluative report on the Group's future nature and functions.

46. With regard to the economic statistics of shipping and the implementation of the "L.2 scheme" for their collection, the Committee noted the relatively slow progress being made but felt that the Workshop on Shippers' Co-operation had contributed to methodological development in this field by laying down the minimum items of information to be maintained by all countries on a uniform basis. It urged continuation of the scheme.

47. In discussing the ESCAP/ADB Commodity Balances Project, the Committee stressed the importance of commodity balances in planning, projecting and monitoring the supply and demand of key commodities and recommended that the secretariat continue the project through the services of a consultant.

48. The Committee devoted particular attention to statistics for rural development, the regional programme for the 1980 round of population and housing censuses and the statistical aspects of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC). The Committee recommended that activities should focus on five main priority areas

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(see para. 26 above). It further suggested a schedule of 10 subject-matter meetings over the period 1977-1979, of which three have already been held.

49. The Working Group on the Regional Programme for Organizing the 1980 Censuses of Population and Housing was held at Bangkok in May 1977. The Group devoted considerable attention to organizational and preparatory aspects of the census and emphasized the need for adequate documentation. The Group also discussed other aspects of censuses such as data processing, the training of census personnel, country technical assistance requirements, the possible use of geo-coding and the relationship of the 1980 census programme to the World Fertility Survey. The Working Group's deliberations and recommendations provided major input for revising the 1970 Asian recommendations on population and housing censuses and in compiling the Asian and Pacific Recommendations for the 1980 Censuses of Population and Housing, which provided input into the world recommendations for the 1980 round. (See E/CN.3/515 and Add.1-3, also before the Commission under item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda.)

50. The Regional Workshop on the Computer Edit of Censuses and Surveys was convened at Bangkok in August 1977. The Workshop dealt with two critical areas that had an adverse effect on the timeliness of statistical reporting, namely, data entry and the editing of input data, and examined how computer editing could provide a comprehensive means of detecting and correcting errors. The meeting recognized the value of a generalized software package for census and survey edit and emphasized the importance of early completion and of the CONCOR system within the region.

51. The Working Group of Statistical Experts held its second session at Bangkok in November 1977. It reviewed statistical development activities in ESCAP countries, with special reference to household survey programmes and capabilities. It emphasized the importance of technical meetings on statistical subjects and urged the secretariat to increase its efforts to secure the necessary funds.

52. The Seminar on Statistics for Rural Development was held at New Delhi in April 1978. The financial support for this meeting was provided by CEFTC and the Government of the Netherlands fund for the ESCAP programme on rural development.

53. A Seminar on Statistics for Small-scale and Household Industries is scheduled to be held at Bangkok, from 11 to 17 July 1978.

D. Statistical training

54. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), previously known as the Asian Statistical Institute, continued to provide general, advanced and country courses, and some research facilities during its second phase, 1975-1979. It also arranged panel discussions on topical items.

55. Its seventh general course of six-month duration was completed in March 1977. The eighth general course, which was completely restructured to reflect more accurately the particular statistical requirements of countries of the region, took place from October 1977 to the end of March 1978. Two advanced courses on

topics of contemporary interest were organized in 1977 and two were planned for 1978. Four country courses lasting from four to eight weeks, with participation of between 18 and 28 students, were also organized in 1977 in Bangladesh, Iran, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Negotiations are in progress to conduct six country courses in 1978.

56. The regular teaching staff of SIAP comprises subject-matter experts financed from the Institute's regular budget and, from time to time, from non-reimbursable loans provided by France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Countries continued to make use of the ESCAP/Netherlands Fellowship Programme, whereby fellowships that include the reimbursement of travel cost and living expenses are awarded to nationals in one country for training in another country within the region.

57. Early in 1977, at the instance of ESCAP, the Government of India organized an 18-week ad hoc course in data processing for six trainees from Afghanistan. The course was considered useful by the trainees, thus indicating that ESCAP should continue exploring possibilities for similar training arrangements between two or more countries of the region.

58. In collaboration with SIAP, ESCAP is currently exploring the possibility of organizing statistical training courses of 6-8 weeks' duration for French-speaking countries of the Pacific in collaboration with the Government of France and the South Pacific Commission. Two types of instruction are envisaged: (a) general training in statistical methods for participants with only a high school education, and (b) courses designed for officers in national statistical offices, for example, in demography and in national accounts. ESCAP is also investigating with the Government of France the possibility of resuming the provision of teaching experts to those countries of South East Asia where French can be used as a medium of instruction.

59. Following the designation by the Committee on Statistics of statistical training as a priority area, ESCAP has been collecting information from the countries of the region on their training programmes, needs and facilities available. This information will be presented to the Committee at its third session, which is scheduled to be held at Bangkok in October 1978. Further, acting on the suggestion of the Working Group of Statistical Experts at its November 1977 meeting that technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) be applied to training, for example in the exchange of experts and expertise, the ESCAP secretariat has been disseminating, through its Statistical Newsletter, information on training facilities that could be used by other countries.

E. Advisory services

60. The regional adviser on national accounts, financed from the Headquarters regular budget, continued to provide valuable assistance to the countries of the region in national accounts and related topics of data sources and organization. He undertook missions to Sri Lanka, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, the Trust

Territory of the Pacific Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, the Cook Islands and Afghanistan.

61. A regional adviser on social and demographic statistics, provided by the Government of the Netherlands on a funds-in-trust basis, worked in the region from March 1976 to February 1978. He undertook a critical evaluation of demographic and other social statistics obtained through censuses and surveys and advised on the feasibility of various series of social statistics. He rendered these services to the Cook Islands, Indonesia, Thailand, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and Samoa.

62. The functions of the regional adviser on vital statistics, financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), consist of assisting Governments in improving their vital statistics and civil registration systems and, where necessary, advising on demographic sample surveys related to vital statistics. Since joining the secretariat in December 1976, the adviser has visited Burma, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Tonga, the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, the Republic of Korea, India and Bangladesh.

63. A regional adviser on data preparation and processing of censuses and surveys, also financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), worked in the region during 1977. He installed, and advised countries on the use of, the COCENTS system, a package programme for the computer processing of censuses and surveys. He provided this expertise to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

64. A third UNFPA-funded regional adviser, on population censuses and surveys, joined the secretariat in September 1977. His duties include promoting country participation in the 1980 round of population and housing censuses and advising Governments on the organization and conduct of censuses. To date he has undertaken work in Thailand, the New Hebrides, the Cook Islands and Maldives.

III. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

65. The statistical activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) are chiefly concentrated in the Division of Statistics and Quantitative Analysis. Its programme has been concerned with the collection, analysis, evaluation and presentation of statistics as well as quantitative analysis of such data for the use by the ECLA secretariat and for general information, in the economic and social fields. In the context of the global programme of the United Nations Statistical Office, promotion of the development of national statistics and the improvement of international comparability are pursued. The programme covers participation in the regional technical co-operation programme, the organization of seminars and working groups and the maintenance of close contact with regional activities of the specialized agencies and with the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI).

66. During the period under review the 1975 and 1976 issues of the Statistical Yearbook for Latin America were prepared.

67. The Division published Statistical Papers on the terms of trade of Latin America ("América Latina: relación de precios del intercambio") and on indicators of socio-economic development ("Indicadores del desarrollo económico y social en América Latina"). A third Statistical Paper on historical series of the economic growth of Latin America ("Crecimiento económico en América Latina") is to be published. Informative notes advancing the earliest estimates of growth, trade and payments of each country in the region and for the region as a whole for internal use are prepared at the end of each year.

68. A documentary file has been organized on statistical methods, concepts and recommendations by international and regional agencies.

A. National accounts and related matters

69. The data base on the national accounts series for the countries of the region was maintained, up-dated and analysed. Sectoral and expenditure series, as well as input-output data, were edited by computer. The series on product expressed in national currencies and United States dollars at constant prices has been maintained.

70. A document on input-output tables of countries of the ECLA region has been prepared.

71. The work on co-ordination continued with a permanent group of Latin American experts on social accounting, formed on the occasion of the meeting of the Working Group on Statistics of Income Distribution, Consumption and Wealth, held in Chile in November 1971 (ST/ECLA/CONF.42/L.6), which is now composed of 80 members.

B. Evaluation and analysis of Latin American data on income distribution

72. A joint ECLA/World Bank research project resulted in estimates of the distribution of income for different countries, and detailed tabulations relating income to different socio-economic characteristics.

73. An analysis of factors associated with income inequalities was undertaken and a paper on "Decomposition analysis of the inequality of earning in Latin American countries" was produced.

74. Work has been done on estimating poverty lines for 12 Latin American countries and on assessing the dimensions of poverty in each of them; a paper on this subject has been prepared. Work began on obtaining data for the drawing of poverty profiles for some of the countries.

C. External trade and balance of payments

75. The series on trade and on payments of the Latin American countries were up-dated, maintained and systematized. Quantum and unit indexes of exports and imports, as well as of terms of trade, continued to be calculated and published.

76. A special project for designing a system for organizing countries' trade statistics for quick and flexible retrieval has begun with the co-operation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

77. A documentation was published on the longer-term series of imports classified according to economic use or destination ("America Latina: Importaciones clasificadas según uso o destino económico (CUODE) 1948-1974" (E/CEPAL/1043).

D. Industrial statistics

78. The series on manufacturing output and employment were maintained and up-dated, as well as those corresponding to the physical output of principal products. The regional index on mining output was also updated.

79. A special study on the coverage and reliability of industrial statistics in Latin American countries was launched.

E. Demographic and social statistics

80. A data file from household surveys in Latin American countries was organized, and work proceeded on the construction of dictionaries of variables, conversion of records and a guide to available tabulations. The file was expanded with the addition of new micro-data bases.

81. A document on the structure of consumption expenditure of the households by income groups ("Estadísticas sobre la estructura del gasto de consumo de los hogares según finalidad del gasto, por grupos de ingreso") was produced on the basis of the results of family budget surveys in the data file.
82. Work has been done in preparation for the 1980 population and housing censuses. A joint evaluation of the 1970 census experience and of methodological and practical problems was undertaken with the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), the Programa Regional de Empleo, para América Latino y el Caribe (PREALC) and the regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. As a result, further work was carried out and a document on antecedents and guidelines for the 1980 population censuses ("Antecedents y orientaciones para los censos de población de 1980 (CEPAL/EST/Versión Preliminar/1969)) was presented to the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) at its thirteenth session, held at Santo Domingo in November 1977.
83. Work proceeded jointly with PREALC on the organization of a data file of employment and unemployment statistics, as well as on the maintenance and updating of the social and demographic series and indicators.

F. Technical co-operation

84. Technical assistance to the countries of the region in demographic and social statistics was provided through missions by regional advisers in the following fields: household surveys, sampling methods for demographic statistics and methods for censuses and demographic statistics. Missions were carried out in the following countries: Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago. Advisory services in methods for census and demographic statistics were discontinued for budgetary reasons. Advisory services on computer methods for demographic and social statistics had also been previously discontinued for budgetary reasons.
85. Lack of financial resources continued to impede the provision of advisory services in national accounts and basic economic statistics, which were nevertheless requested by many countries of the region and also by subregional mechanisms of economic co-operation.
86. The Chief of the External Sector Statistics Section attended the eleventh meeting of the Advisory Commission on Statistics of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), held at Montevideo in November 1977.
87. The following methodological documents were prepared by the regional advisers: "Determinación del límite en la construcción de los estratos" (CEPAL/Borrador/EST/149), "Estimador basado en un modelo aditivo" (CEPAL/Borrador/EST/151), "Algunas consideraciones sobre los censos de población en Latinoamérica de la década del 70" (CEPAL/Borrador/EST/154), "Diseño muestral y trabajo operativo de una investigación piloto para evaluar tres

cuestionarios sobre ingresos" (CEPAL/Borrador/EST/158) and "Censo de población de 1970: recopilación de normas internacionales y prácticas nacionales en América Latina" (CEPAL/Borrador/EST/155).

38. The Chief of the Division of Statistics and Quantitative Analysis and the regional advisers participated in an ad hoc Working Group of IACC on Regional Advisory Services convened at Santiago in November 1977 for the purpose of establishing a mechanism for the co-ordination of regional advisory services. A document providing preliminary assessment of the technical assistance requirements for the development and consolidation of household survey capabilities in Latin American countries was prepared for that meeting. The document also served as an input to the National Household Survey Capability Programme established by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2055 (LXII).

IV. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

89. The statistical activities undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continued to be concentrated on the basic objectives of (a) encouraging the use of and demand for improved statistics for public purposes and helping with the development of African statistical services; and (b) within the framework of the United Nations data system, providing data for the region as a whole, African statistics have improved somewhat and external trade and agricultural statistics are now produced by most of the countries of the region. However, fewer countries publish data on national accounts, population, employment and social activities than publish external trade and agricultural statistics and some countries publish no statistics whatever. Considerable room exists for the improvement in the published statistics. The following notes summarize the principal developments during the last two years.

A. General aspects of co-ordination and development

90. The tenth session of the Conference of African Statisticians met at ECA headquarters in October 1977. One of the important questions considered was the means whereby the Conference could become more responsive to the changing economic and social situation of the region and the Conference undertook to assume a more operational role for itself by utilizing the possibilities for regional technical co-operation in statistics, particularly through intergovernmental advisory services, taking more direct responsibility for some aspects of statistical development and redefining statistical priorities. The Conference also reviewed the ECA statistical work programme and publications in the light of national requirements and those arising from the New International Economic Order.

91. The Statistical Newsletter and the Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin for Africa have been published periodically and a report on an electronic data processing inventory has been prepared. The 1977 edition of the Directory of African Statisticians has also been prepared. However, the Bibliography of African Statistical Publications has not yet been issued because the information is expected to be computerized.

B. Training

92. A Working Group to Review Statistical Training Needs in Africa met in August 1977 and based its deliberations on a report prepared by two African consultants. The outcome was a proposal for a comprehensive Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), which will incorporate the services of institutions already providing regional training facilities. Detailed estimates of requirements led to the conclusion that the number of statisticians being trained should be increased by about 60 per cent in order to meet total national requirements rather than just those of central statistical services.

93. The programme proposals were endorsed with some modifications by the Conference of African Statisticians and the relevant document has been referred to the ECA Executive Committee for approval.

C. National accounts, finance and prices

94. In the field of national accounts there were increasing demands for advisory services, which could not all be fulfilled owing to a shortage of travel funds. Missions took place in Benin, Chad, the Ivory Coast, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland and the United Republic of Cameroon. A staff member gave a course on national accounts statistics at the Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for Developing Countries in April 1978.

95. Estimates of gross domestic product classified by origin and expenditure for all countries of the region were extended through 1976, provisional estimates for 1977 were compiled and reasonably good progress was made in incorporating sectoral deflators therein. The compilation of balance of payments and public finance data continued and their integration with the computerized national accounts file was undertaken. It will be some time before information on these transactions is sufficiently comprehensive and up to date to be useful for analytical purposes, but means of overcoming the data problem are under investigation.

96. In price statistics the secretariat made progress in developing sectoral deflators as indicated above and these incorporated most of the scanty price data available in the region. There was also a country mission in support of the International Comparison Project (ICP) and work continued on the compilation of more analytical price data for selected commodities. As an initial attempt to organize an operational activity from its own resources, the Conference of African Statisticians undertook to convene a working group to examine African price statistics requirements and determine the methods whereby these data can be obtained.

D. External trade

97. A regional inquiry into African external trade statistics practices was completed and it was revealed that these statistics were less satisfactory than had previously been thought. Follow-up action is therefore being undertaken on a country-by-country basis.

98. Estimates of imports and exports by sections of the Standard International Trade Classification for all countries of the region were extended through 1976 and provisional estimates for 1977 were compiled; the secretariat also produced a draft of the first issue of series C in Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa containing analytical summary tables. With some development this publication can help to answer many of the current questions on intra-African trade, terms of trade and the marketing of selected commodities.

E. Industrial statistics

99. The compilation of industrial and energy statistics continued in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office. A secretariat review of these data indicated problems of comparability and timeliness but countries are endeavouring to extend the coverage of their industrial statistics to include smaller establishments. The main requirements noted by the Conference of African Statisticians are the generation of a more active flow of data and a co-ordinated regional approach to the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics.

F. Other economic statistics

100. In respect of tourism and transport statistics preliminary methodological guidelines were produced and data compilations were maintained.

101. The African Statistical Yearbook for 1975 was issued late as a result of printing difficulties. The 1976 issue was delayed by the introduction of subregional summary tables; it went to press in January 1978. The Statistical Information Bulletin for Africa (formerly the Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin for Africa) is making normal progress and No. 12 is expected to go to the printer in June 1978.

G. Demographic and social statistics

102. Administrative and technical support to the African Census Programme was maintained through 1977 (see paras. 103-104) and efforts were directed towards making the African Household Survey Capability Programme properly operational (see paras. 105-106).

H. African Census Programme

103. The African Census Programme, initiated in 1971, officially terminated at the end of 1977. Its aim was to assist the 22 African countries that had found it difficult to participate in the 1970 round of population censuses. Apart from improving African demographic statistics the programme contributed remarkably to the establishment of statistical infrastructures. Two of the 22 countries still have to enumerate their populations and in two others the operation has proved impracticable. However, UNFPA has agreed that the work should continue into the 1980 round of population censuses and four regional advisers will be available plus supporting facilities from United Nations Headquarters.

104. A study on methods and problems of the 1980 round of African population censuses and surveys was completed, thus enabling the Conference of African Statisticians to formulate provisional recommendations for the 1980 censuses. However the Conference felt that a working group should be organized to consider the matter in more detail.

I. African Household Survey Capability Programme

105. The success of the census programme and the national expertise and confidence that it generated resulted in proposals for much broader and continuing data collection arrangements under the African Household Survey Capability Programme, which the Conference of African Statisticians has been developing during its last three sessions. The essential requirement is the establishment or improvement of national field survey organizations to provide continuing and integrated data on productive activity, income, consumption, expenditure and related social and demographic characteristics.

106. The African initiative in survey development, which gave rise to Economic and Social Council resolution 2055 (LXII) calling for the establishment of a National Household Survey Capability Programme in any interested developing countries, is gaining momentum in the African region and in about one quarter of the member states of ECA active survey operations were under way during the reporting period. Staffing arrangements of the ECA Statistics Division have been modified to support the new effort in basic data collection but the secretariat resources are limited and arrangements are being made to provide a small technical and operational advisory facility that can devote its time to the various aspects of survey development.

V. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

107. In its programme of work for the period from November 1976 to February 1978 the Statistics Unit of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) chiefly concentrated on: (a) economic statistics, with special emphasis on the preparation and development of national accounts; (b) prices, index numbers and purchasing power parity for international comparison; (c) preparation of the 1978 Statistical Abstract of the Arab World; and (d) technical services rendered upon request to the various countries in the region.
108. In May 1977 the Unit published Bulletin No. 1 of the National Accounts Studies, entitled "Economic growth of the ECWA countries throughout the period 1960-1975". Bulletin No. 2, entitled "Gross domestic product by type of expenditures and industrial origin" is in preparation.
109. In June 1977, the Unit assisted Yemen in preparing and publishing, jointly with ECWA, the National Accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic for the Years 1968/70-1975/76.
110. The Statistics Unit assisted the Department of Statistics of Jordan in setting up the national accounts within the framework of the revised System of National Accounts. In March 1978, a study entitled National Accounts in Jordan 1952-1976 was published jointly by Jordan and ECWA.
111. The first volume of the annual Statistical Abstract of the Arab World has been issued. Despite the limited resources allocated for this project, work on the Abstract continues. Efforts have been made to improve the coverage and content of volume II. A questionnaire has been prepared by the Statistics Unit and most ECWA countries have been visited in order to have the questionnaire completed. Comments received from the various substantive divisions of ECWA as well as from other regional institutions were taken into consideration in the preparation of the questionnaire. Time and staffing permitting, the second volume of the Abstract will be ready in about April 1978.
112. A study of consumer price indices in the ECWA countries has been undertaken and the results will be published in 1978.
113. The Unit is participating in the National Household Survey Capability Programme along with five countries of the ECWA region, namely, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.
114. During the reporting period the regional adviser on national accounts and economic statistics lectured at the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics at Baghdad on the preparation and analysis of economic and social statistics; assisted the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in (a) preparing the 1974, 1975 and 1976 national accounts in the framework of the revised System of National Accounts, (b) setting up commodity balances by value and quantity for the years 1971-1976, (c) preparing input-output tables for 1971-1976 and (d) developing consumer price indices and family budget surveys; and assisted the Governments of Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Jordan and Qatar in the field of economic statistics.

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VI. INTER-AMERICAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

115. The Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI) is a technical organization, co-ordinated with the Organization of American States (OAS), which was established in 1940 to foster statistical development in the Western Hemisphere. By virtue of the Agreement in force between the Council of OAS and IASI, the statistical work of both organizations is carried out jointly.

A. Committee on Improvement of National Statistics

116. The Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS), composed of the chief statistical officers of the American nations, held its thirteenth session at Santo Domingo, from 18 to 21 November 1977, concurrently with the seventh Inter-American Statistical Conference. The principal topic was the adoption of the inter-American standards for the censuses of population and housing to be taken under the Program of the 1980 Census of America. COINS noted that a comparison between the standards for the 1980 censuses of agriculture, adopted at its twelfth session, and those adopted by FAO at its eighteenth Conference show no substantial differences.

117. Two round tables were held during the session on topics of general interest to the statistical offices of the region, namely, confidentiality of statistical information and the use of administrative records for statistical purposes.

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

119. The fourteenth session of COINS is scheduled to be held in the second half of 1979, at Caracas.

120. The third session of the Subcommittee on Demographic, Housing and Related Statistics of COINS was held from 15 to 22 March 1977. The agenda included the following topics: (a) background information on population and housing censuses, mainly concerning the activities carried out in connexion with the Program of the 1970 Census of America (COTA-1970); (b) examination, discussion and preparation of the proposal to be submitted to COINS for the formulation of the standards for the population and housing censuses to be taken under the Program of the 1980 Census of America (COTA-1980); (c) occupational classification, classification of economic activities and classification of educational activities; and (d) technical co-operation for the 1980 population and housing censuses. The proposals of the Subcommittee were adopted by COINS at its thirteenth session.

B. Inter-American Statistical Conference

121. The Inter-American Statistical Conference, in accordance with the OAS charter, is an inter-American specialized conference and one of the organs of OAS. As such, the Conference meets to consider statistical matters of common interest to the American States and to develop inter-American co-operation in the field of statistics.

122. The seventh Conference was held at Santo Domingo, from 22 to 28 November 1977, the principal topic being the modernization of national statistical systems as a requisite for the improvement of the statistics of the American countries.

C. General Assembly of IASI members

123. The General Assembly is a forum for the presentation and discussion of matters of interest to the members. The seventh session of the General Assembly took place at Santo Domingo, from 22 to 25 November 1977, concurrently with the seventh Inter-American Statistical Conference. The Assembly held two technical meetings, one on the development of the statistical profession in the Western Hemisphere and one on measures of income distribution. A document entitled "Prospects of statistics development", prepared by the President of IASI, was also discussed.

D. Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics

124. The revised version of section V (Agriculture (concepts, definitions and tables)) of the Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics, (PIEB), which contains the modifications recommended by the Subcommittee on Agricultural Statistics of COINS and approved by COINS itself, was published. Other sections of PIEB are in the process of revision. At the request of IASI, the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas of Chile and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos of Argentina prepared the draft standards for statistics on individual and household income and for railroad transportation statistics, respectively. These draft standards will be submitted to members of COINS for comments prior to their consideration by COINS for adoption at the inter-American level.

E. Technical co-operation

125. During the period under review, technical assistance missions - usually of short duration - were carried out in the following fields: census of agriculture, employment and unemployment survey, evaluation of statistical publications, integrated programme of labour statistics, dissemination of statistics, industrial statistics, port statistics, establishment of a socio-economic data bank, census of transportation, statistical organization, external trade statistics etc.

F. Statistical training

126. Statistical training activities are carried out under the responsibility of the Inter-American Statistical Training Center (CIENES) at Santiago, Chile. During the reference period the following activities were carried out: a course on mathematical statistics (leading to a Master's degree), an applied research programme for graduates of the course on mathematical statistics, specialized courses on statistical techniques in education and on information and research planning in tourism, a course on applied statistics to the economic and social field and a seminar on the 1980 Census of Agriculture.

127. With the collaboration of CIENES professors, national courses on statistical techniques, labour statistics, economic and social statistics etc. were conducted in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Haiti, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

G. Publications

128. The following were the principal publications issued during the reference period:

(a) The journal Estadística, the official organ of IASI, which constitutes one of its means of fostering statistical interchange and development in the Western Hemisphere;

(b) América en Cifras, 1977, Situación Social, vol. I. This publication has been redesigned to summarize, in three volumes, the data that were considered to be of greatest interest in previous editions;

(c) The Boletín Estadístico, published monthly, supplies data that are required before the subsequent edition of América en Cifras is issued;

(d) Actividades Estadísticas de las Naciones Americanas, third edition: volumes on Chile, the Dominican Republic and Panama; the volume on Colombia is in preparation;

(e) Censo de Población: Temas, Definiciones, Clasificaciones y Cuestionarios Utilizados por los Países de la Región Americana /en los censos de 1970/;

(f) Censo de Habitación: Temas, Definiciones, Clasificaciones y Cuestionarios Utilizados por los Países de la Región Americana /en los censos de 1970/.
