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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS

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 twentieth session of the Commission, in February-March 1979.

* E/CN.3/535.

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

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INTRODUCTION

1. At the twentieth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General entitled "Regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies" (E/CN.3/529). ^{1/} The present document is the corresponding report on the work done since the twentieth session. A progress report on the statistical work of the specialized agencies (E/CN.3/560) and one on the work of the United Nations Statistical Office (E/CN.3/561) are also before the Commission.

I. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

A. Conference of European Statisticians

2. The Conference of European Statisticians held its twenty-seventh session in June 1979 (ECE/CES/14), and the twenty-eighth session is scheduled for June 1980. The main developments in the Conference's work during the programme years 1978/79 and 1979/80 are described below.

1. Organizational and operational subjects

3. The Working Party on Electronic Data Processing met in May 1979 and considered the following subjects: computer aspects of the use of registers in statistical offices; generalized programmes for statistical data processing; use of advanced techniques for the presentation of computerized statistical output; creation and development of automated data banks; and the interdependence of trends and requirements in computing technology and statistical services.

4. Two seminars on integrated statistical information systems (ISIS) and related matters were held at the Computing Research Centre, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, in October 1978 and September 1979. They reviewed the following topics: general architecture of a computerized statistical information system; statistical data dictionaries/directories (meta data bases); interactive terminal-oriented interface between statistical users and the computer; the role of computer techniques in the regionalization of statistical activities; and data editing.

2. Economic statistics

5. The Conference continued to co-operate in the work of the Statistical Commission on the extension and further development of systems of national accounts and balances. A meeting of the Working Party on National Accounts and Balances was held in February 1980 to consider new developments in the review of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and in the work on the System of Balances

^{1/} For a summary of the discussion in the Commission, see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No. 3 (E/1979/23), paras. 231-234.

of the National Economy (MPS); SNA/MPS links; and the orientation of work on the co-ordination of economic statistics with the national accounts and balances. A bilateral study has been undertaken by France and Hungary with a view to testing the conceptual framework for SNA/MPS comparisons.

6. Work continued on the programme of international comparisons of basic economic aggregates and, particularly, on the European comparison within the framework of the International Comparison Project (ICP).

7. Work also 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).

8. Meetings were held on concepts and definitions in external trade statistics, on price and quantity measures in services, and on statistics of fixed capital formation and stock and related aspects of statistics of profits.

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. Work continued on a European handbook of economic accounts for agriculture. A meeting on food consumption and nutrition statistics was held in March 1980.

10. The Conference continued to co-operate with the senior advisers to ECE Governments on science and technology. A meeting on statistics of transfers of technology is to be held in May 1980.

11. A meeting on general energy statistics, held in November 1978, recommended the preparation of definitions to be used in conjunction with the over-all energy balances, and reviewed the format and content of Annual Bulletin of General Energy Statistics and related aspects of the publication programme of ECE in energy statistics. Work is continuing on the collection of data on over-all energy balances and on the completion of the definitions.

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). The seventh session of the Working Party on FSDS, held in December 1978, reviewed work on selected aspects of FSDS, links among different fields of FSDS and methods of integration of social and demographic statistics, and considered the contribution to be made at the regional level to the programme of work of the United Nations Statistical Office in this area.

13. The Conference continued to co-operate with the World Health Organization (WHO) on health statistics, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on statistics of education and of culture, and with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on manpower statistics. A meeting on cultural statistics was held, jointly with UNESCO, in April 1979 to review the scope and coverage of a framework for a system of cultural statistics prepared by

UNESCO and to discuss the ways in which the UNESCO programme of work on cultural indicators should be linked with the framework. A meeting on manpower statistics was held, jointly with the ILO, in July 1979 to review the international standards for manpower statistics and discuss new developments.

14. In the demographic field, a meeting on migration statistics was held in January 1979. Work has started on preparations for a meeting on the co-ordination of demographic statistics within FSIDS.

4. Environment and related statistics

15. The Conference continued to participate in the work of the Statistical Commission on the development of environment statistics. A comparative survey of national compilations of environment statistics has been undertaken, and work has continued on conceptual approaches to the development of frameworks, such as links with national accounts and balances.

16. A meeting on land-use statistics, held in March 1980, reached agreement on a draft international classification of land use for the ECE region, and recommended further work on the description of the categories distinguished in the classification. The meeting also recommended that further work be undertaken on statistics of water use.

17. Work has been undertaken in preparation for the Seminar on Environmental Statistics, to be held in September 1980, jointly with the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental Problems.

18. A consultation with the secretariats of international organizations was held in July 1978 to consider the harmonization of regions delimited by different organizations.

19. An informal meeting on regional statistics will be held in June 1980.

B. Statistical work of the principal subsidiary bodies of ECE

20. The Group of Experts on Coal Statistics of the Coal Committee of ECE met in June 1979. The main items discussed were statistical bulletins; international definitions, standards and classifications of solid fuels; statistical methods of accounting for labour consumption in the coal industry; capital formation; costs of production and investment intentions; statistical methods of recording and analysing working time at mechanized coal faces in order to minimize lost time and international comparison of surface workers at underground coal mines and their influence on productivity.

21. The Group of Experts on Transport Statistics of the Inland Transport Committee of ECE met in January 1980. The main subjects discussed were the revision of the Commodity Classification for Transport Statistics in Europe (CSTE);

possibilities for developing a Classification of Characteristics of Handling Cargo in relation to CSTE; price and quantity measures in transport; use of energy in transport; 1980 road traffic censuses and the ECE statistical bulletins on transport statistics and road traffic accidents.

22. The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics of the Timber Committee of ECE and the European Forestry Commission of FAO held a session in July 1979. The main items discussed were forest resource assessment, labour statistics, taxation, classification of forest products, surveys of industry capacity, conversion factors and forest fire statistics.

23. The Ad Hoc Meeting on Questions of Statistics Concerning Engineering Industries and Automation, sponsored jointly by the ECE Ad Hoc Meeting of Experts on Engineering Industries and Working Party on Automation, held a session in March 1980. The Meeting considered the methodological problems, availability, comparability and collection of statistics; the results of the first test-run on the availability of statistics for production and trade of engineering goods and the revision of the product breakdown in Bulletin of Statistics on World Trade in Engineering Products.

24. During the period under review, statistical issues were also considered by other principal subsidiary bodies of ECE, namely, the Committee on Electric Power, the Committee on Gas, the Steel Committee and the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning. These and other principal subsidiary bodies were informed of the relevant statistical work of the Conference and the ECE secretariat.

C. Statistical collection, compilation and analysis

25. 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 on a comparable basis for all the countries of the ECE region. Work has already started on national accounts and balances, labour force and energy.

II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

26. The Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its third session, in October 1978, discussed continued support to the 1980 Population and Housing Censuses; statistics for rural development; promotion of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), support to statistical training; promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries in statistics etc. Suggestions were also made on the continuing activities in economic and social statistics. The recent activities of ESCAP have been based on these discussions but, at the same time, measures to develop statistics relating to newer areas, such as energy and the environment, have been initiated.

27. Normally the fourth session of the Committee on Statistics would have met in 1980. But at its thirty-sixth session, ESCAP decided that the Committee should continue to meet every two years, but in odd years. Hence, the fourth session will be held in 1981.

28. The Working Group of Statistical Experts, which met from 29 October to 1 November 1979, reviewed statistical development activities in ESCAP countries and stressed, inter alia, the importance of assigning priority to NHSCP; the complementarity of household surveys to other statistical data; the development of disaggregated data adequately to cover rural areas and particular groups of the population; greater coverage of social topics; close collaboration between the ESCAP Statistics Division and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) on a project on statistics for rural development; and identifiable cost components for statistical work in development projects.

A. Statistical development

29. Four technical meetings - in addition to that of the Working Group of Statistical Experts mentioned in paragraph 28 above - were held in 1979; the Second Workshop on Economic Statistics of Shipping, organized by the Division of Shipping, Ports and Inland Waterways; the Seminar on Statistical Organization; a study group on the co-ordination of government information systems, organized by the Division of Administration; and the Asian Subregional Workshop on the Harmonization of External Trade Statistics and Customs Tariff Nomenclature and Valuation, organized in collaboration with the International Trade Division. The Seminar on Statistical Organization was held in April 1979 at Wellington, New Zealand. It was a regional sequel to the United Nations Interregional Seminar on Statistical Organization, held at Ottawa, Canada in October 1973. The report of the Seminar, which contains organizational charts of the statistical services of the countries of the ESCAP region, has been published and distributed.

1. National Household Survey Capability Programme

30. An NHSCP unit has been set up in the Statistics Division, with the Division Chief as programme leader. An ILO expert on labour force and employment has joined the unit and efforts are being made to obtain the services of an expert on survey methodologies with specialization in sampling.

2. International trade

31. The Statistics Division and the International Trade Division have continued close collaboration, notably on the harmonization of external trade statistics and customs tariff nomenclature. These activities will be pursued primarily through the Trade Co-operation Group, of which the relevant subgroup held its second session in July 1979 to consider country practices in the collection and reporting of international trade statistics. The harmonization of trade statistics and customs tariff nomenclatures was discussed at a workshop for Asian countries in October 1979. The workshop agreed on recommendations for improving the availability and comparability of international trade statistics, including the preparation of a manual and a training programme.

3. Environment statistics

32. The development of regional environment statistics is expected to enter an active phase when the global guidelines being developed by the United Nations Statistical Office are issued. The focus will be on human settlements, land and land use, natural resources and energy.

4. Energy statistics

33. The Statistics Division, in co-operation with the Natural Resources Division, has been active in the collection and dissemination of energy statistics and has continued to provide energy statistics to the United Nations Statistical Office for publication in World Energy Statistics. Data from the Office have been utilized for a number of meetings organized by the ESCAP Natural Resources Division. Efforts are continuing with a view to convening a workshop on energy statistics through extrabudgetary resources.

5. Integrated rural development

34. Efforts continued to be made to undertake case studies for the purpose of developing guidelines for the preparation of data files on statistics of rural development. Additional activities in the context of the recommendations of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development were initiated. The National Household Survey Capability Programme is expected to yield data for planning rural development. The Committee on Statistics had considered community-level statistics to be extremely useful for rural development programmes. The Statistics Division has been associated with an FAO project on community-level statistics and has contributed to guidelines for the development of such statistics.

B. Statistical training and related research

35. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has continued to support SIAP and assist it in organizing regional and subregional courses. It has also continued to disseminate through its Statistical Newsletter and other media information on the SIAP training and research programmes as well as training facilities provided by other institutes.

36. A training workshop for census co-ordinators, financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was organized at Manila, Philippines, from 5 June to 14 August 1979 by SIAP, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and Population Division, the ESCAP Statistics Division and the National Census and Statistics Office of the Philippines. The secretariat has carried out, in collaboration with SIAP, a survey of the training needs of the region and the training facilities and financial and other assistance available; a compendium of the relevant information has been compiled. The Statistical Institute is considering reorienting its programmes to meet the training requirements for NHSCP as a supplement to the training that will be provided by the advisers of the NHSCP unit.

C. Advisory services

37. Regional advisory services in national accounts, vital statistics, population censuses and surveys, data preparation and processing of censuses and surveys, economic statistics of shipping and general demographic statistics were provided. Assistance was also provided to the Government of Viet Nam in preparing a project document for its forthcoming population census and in setting up a demographic statistics unit.

38. The national accounts adviser, rendered assistance in the development of national accounts and in the implementation of the revised System of National Accounts. He undertook critical evaluation studies of current practices in the compilation of national accounts, including input/output tables and flow-of-funds accounts; he advised countries on the collection of data on household income, expenditure and assets.

39. The regional adviser on vital statistics, financed by UNFPA, provided assistance in improving civil registration and vital statistics systems, and on demographic sample surveys related to vital statistics. He lectured at the workshop for census co-ordinators (see para. 36) and at a training course on vital statistics organized by the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in Niue.

40. The regional adviser on population censuses and surveys, financed by UNFPA, rendered assistance in the promotion of the 1980 Programme of Population and Housing Censuses, for example, in drafting of project documents, preparation of pre-computer data processing manuals and tabulation plans, drafting of enumeration questionnaires and reviewing the results of pilot censuses. He lectured at an SIAP advanced seminar on tabulation and analytical processing of population census data, held at Tokyo, Japan, and at the training workshop for census co-ordinators (see para. 36).

41. The regional adviser on data preparation and processing of censuses and surveys (located in the Data Processing Section, Division of Administration) also provided consultative and advisory services to a number of countries of the region.

42. The regional adviser on shipping services (located in the Division for Shipping, Ports and Inland Waterways) rendered assistance to a number of countries in the collection and compilation of economic statistics of shipping.

D. Statistical publications

43. A constant review of the data received has enabled ESCAP to improve the coverage and quality of the data published. Beginning in 1979, ESCAP has been receiving directly from the countries of the region a duplicate of the filled Monthly Bulletin of Statistics questionnaire sent by the United Nations Statistical Office; it has thus been able to improve the timeliness of some of the data series published. With the establishment of direct contact with the

printer abroad, it was possible to reduce substantially the time-lag in printing. During 1979 the secretariat undertook missions to the statistical organizations of six member countries with a view to improving the data flow to ESCAP.

44. The position in respect of statistical publications is as follows:

(a) Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific. The 1977, 1978 and 1979 issues were released and the 1980 issue is in press;

(b) Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics for Asia and the Pacific. The issues were released regularly;

(c) Statistical Indicators for Asia and the Pacific. The quarterly issues were released regularly;

(d) Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific. The issues for the years 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977 were released and the one for 1978 is in press;

(e) Handbook on Agricultural Statistics for Asia and the Pacific. Based on a recommendation of the Committee on Statistics, this new annual publication containing comprehensive data on agricultural statistics was introduced in 1979, replacing Handbook on Cereal and Fertilizer Statistics for Asia and the Pacific. Issues of the Handbook for 1978 and 1979 were released;

(f) Sample Surveys in the ESCAP Region. The fourteenth and fifteenth issues were released and the sixteenth is in preparation;

(g) Statistical Newsletter. The quarterly publication was released regularly.

III. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

45. 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 of 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), as well as participation in the regional body of statisticians, the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS).

A. Statistical collection and quantitative analysis

1. Statistical publications

46. During the period under review, the Statistical Yearbook for Latin America was redesigned in content, and the current set of socio-economic indicators used by ECLA was included for the first time in the 1978 issue. The 1979 issue is in press.

47. CEPAL Statistical Papers were published on the economic growth of Latin America ("Series históricas del crecimiento de América Latina"), consumption expenditures by income groups ("Estadísticas sobre la estructura del gasto de consumo de los hogares por finalidad del gasto, por grupos de ingreso") and the balance of payments ("El balance de pagos de América Latina, 1959-1977"). In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Indicators on the Situation of Children in Latin America and the Caribbean was prepared for a special meeting of UNICEF held in Mexico in May 1979.

48. Informative notes giving the earliest estimates of growth, trade and payments of each country in the region and of the region as a whole are prepared for internal use at the end of each year.

2. National accounts and related matters

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

50. Work began on the analysis of consistency between national accounts estimates, external trade statistics and indices and industrial statistics for a number of Latin American countries. The compilation of input/output tables of countries of the ECLA region was brought up to date and a document on the regional distribution of gross domestic product in Latin American countries has been prepared.

51. Since 1979, ECLA has been collaborating with Programa de Estudios Conjuntos sobre Integración Económica Latinoamericana (ECIEL) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in carrying out a new investigation of prices and purchasing power parities in Latin America which may also contribute to the International Comparison Project (ICP). The Commission concentrates on guiding and centralizing the estimates on the structure of final expenditures prepared by the ICP participating countries. For that purpose, a document was prepared on the detailed classification of expenditures of the gross domestic product and the corresponding statistical questionnaire. The Commission participated in the Conference on International Comparisons of Purchasing Power Parities and Real Products for Latin America, held at Rio de Janeiro in January 1979, at which it presented a document on extrapolation of purchasing power parities, and in the discussion seminars of the ECIEL project, which took place at Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá in 1979.

3. Income distribution and poverty

52. Work proceeded on the ECLA/World Bank research project on evaluation and analysis of Latin American data on income distribution. The reliability of the data was assessed, and preliminary estimates of the distribution of income in different countries were produced; these are now being revised. Work is under way in analysing the income distribution profiles with respect to different socio-economic characteristics.

53. Poverty estimates for 12 countries were published as CEPAL Paper No. 27 ("Dimensiones de la pobreza en América Latina") and were presented to the Workshop on Planning for Basic Needs in Latin America, convened at Bogotá in March 1979 by the Programa Regional de Empleo para América Latina y el Caribe (PREALC) and the Institute of Social Studies (Netherlands).

54. Poverty profiles were drawn for six countries and served as an input to the interagency ECLA/United Nations Development Programme project on critical poverty in Latin America.

4. Basic economic statistics

55. The series on manufacturing output and employment were maintained and brought up to date, as were those on the physical output of principal products. The regional index on mining output was brought up to date, and a regional index of manufacturing output was compiled for internal use.

56. Work proceeded on a special study of the coverage and reliability of industrial statistics in Latin American countries.

57. An analysis of the cyclical fluctuations in the manufacturing sector of Argentina, 1950-1979, was published as CEPAL Paper, No. 34.

5. External trade and balance of payments

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

59. The basic data for the bank of trade statistics were obtained for the years 1970-1975, with the assistance of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) and the Secretariat of the Central American Common Market (SIECA). Tables were compiled to convert data from national nomenclatures into the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).

6. Social and demographic statistics

60. The data base of social statistics and indicators was expanded during the period under review, and the corresponding methodological problems in the construction of indicators on education and labour received special attention.

Work proceeded on the specification of data, the construction of dictionaries of variables and the systematization of tabulations from household surveys for the data bank. The acquisition of new surveys for the data bank was considerably expanded. A file-index has been devised to keep track of all the official surveys conducted in the region, identifying their characteristics and the availability of documentation.

61. As a benchmark of the data base on employment statistics being developed jointly with PREALC, a preliminary version of a document on the economically active population by branch of activity and employment status for 1950, 1960 and 1970 ("La población económicamente activa en los países de América Latina por sectores de actividad y categorías del empleo: 1950, 1960 y 1970") was distributed for comment among experts in this field in each of the Latin American countries.

62. Work began on the quantitative analysis of long-term transformations in the structure of the labour force in Latin American countries.

7. Latin American data bank of socio-economic statistics

63. A data bank of external trade statistics has been established. The computerized system for managing the external trade data of the countries of the region (ARECEL), developed with the co-operation of IDB, is already operational for standard purposes. For all LAFTA and SIECA countries, the stored data cover 1970-1975, and for some of them up to 1977. The rest of the countries will be incorporated into the system in the near future. The data of each country are stored according to the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature (BTN), the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the Clasificación según Uso o Destino Económico (CUODE) and the Classification by Broad Economic Categories (BEC). A general system to compute the total quantum and unit-price index for each country is being developed.

64. A data bank of household statistics from household surveys has also been established. Micro data from a number of surveys conducted in many countries of the region have been incorporated into the bank. The data are made available for computer processing, and the users are provided with basic information such as the nature of the variables, their frequencies and the corresponding codification manual.

B. Methods and standards

65. A document on national accounting at constant prices in Latin America ("Contabilidad nacional a precios constantes en América Latina") was published as CEPAL Paper No. 24. A document on the structure, methods and sources of Latin American input/output tables was presented to an expert group meeting held in Mexico in November 1979.

66. A document was prepared entitled "Measurement of employment and income in urban areas through household surveys", and a working group of national experts was convened at Santiago in July 1979 to discuss the subject; the final report was

submitted to the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) at its fourteenth session, held at Caracas in October 1979. A document entitled "Conditioning factors for the improvement of sample designs in the Latin American countries" was also prepared. A draft of the regional chapter of the forthcoming United Nations Handbook of Household Surveys was prepared for the expert group convened by the United Nations Statistical Office at Geneva in March 1980.

67. In connexion with the 1980 round of population and housing censuses, the revised version of a document on antecedents and guidelines for the 1980 population censuses ("La experiencia latinoamericana en los censos de población de 1970 y orientaciones para los censos de 1980") was issued.

68. "Data from censuses and household surveys for the analysis of female labour in Latin America and the Caribbean: appraisal of deficiencies and recommendations for dealing with them" (E/CEPAL/L.206) was prepared, in collaboration with the Centro de Estudios de Población (CENEP), and submitted to the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Latin American Social and Economic Development, held at Caracas, in November 1979.

69. A document entitled "Measuring levels of living in Latin America: an overview of main problems" was presented at the Expert Group Meeting on the Measurement of Living Standards, convened by the World Bank at Washington, D.C., in February 1980.

70. The Workshop on Environmental Statistics, held at Santiago from 7 to 11 April 1980, was attended by experts from some of the countries of the region. The Workshop sought a definition of national and regional needs in statistical matters and an evaluation of the present state of the environment. It also discussed the framework proposed by the United Nations Statistical Office for the development of environment statistics and the methodology to be used in the ECLA study on the state of the environment. The Workshop suggested priorities for future tasks and proposed guidelines for a pilot study to be carried out in one of the countries of the region for the purpose of trying out statistical techniques.

C. Statistical development and co-ordination

1. Technical co-operation

71. Technical assistance in demographic and social statistics was provided to the countries of the region by a team of three regional advisers, financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), in the following fields: household surveys and population censuses; sampling methods for demographic and social statistics; and data processing of censuses and surveys. Fifty-seven missions were carried out during the period under review, in Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela.

72. Lack of financial resources continued to impede the provision of advisory services in national accounts and basic economic statistics, which were nevertheless

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requested by many countries of the region and also by subregional mechanisms of economic co-operation.

73. Special attention was paid to the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries of the region. The Commission's efforts made it possible for census officers from several countries to watch census activities in Chile and Mexico, furthermore, the Commission enabled the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC) of Argentina to co-operate with Bolivia and Uruguay in the field of income and expenditure surveys, and a Jamaican expert to help Haiti design a programme of improvement in external trade statistics.

2. National Household Survey Capability Programme

74. The Division of Statistics and Quantitative Analysis became the regional advisory resource centre of NHSCP; the team of regional advisers in social and demographic statistics became the core of the technical and operational facilities for this new function, with the support of the permanent staff of the Division. The International Labour Office (ILO) made a special contribution to the Programme by allocating a regional adviser on household surveys to ECLA's regional team, which enhanced its technical and operational capabilities.

75. With staff of the Central Co-ordinating Unit of NHSCP, missions for the design of country projects were carried out in Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Other promotional activities were also carried out among the countries of the region.

76. The machinery for co-ordinating NHSCP activities in the region with the development of the Inter-American Household Survey Programme (PIDEH), sponsored by the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS), is being worked out.

3. 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme

77. As a preparatory activity for the 1980 World Programme, a Latin American census training workshop was organized by ECLA, in collaboration with the Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE) of Peru, with the assistance of the United Nations Statistical Office and funded by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). The workshop took place at Lima, from 4 September to 7 November 1978 and was attended by 65 census officers from 19 countries. The conclusions drawn were issued as "Informe sobre conclusiones" (E/CEPAL/L.185).

78. The publication of a bulletin on population and housing census activities in the region was initiated by ECLA as a means of informing census officers and statistical authorities in each country of methods being applied and of the development of the Programme in the region.

4. Committee on Improvement of National Statistics

79. The Commission has become an ex-officio member of the Co-ordinating Board of the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics, which is a regional statistical body composed of the chief statistician of each country in the Western Hemisphere. This makes possible closer co-ordination of the efforts of the regional

organizations supporting COINS - the Inter-American Statistical Institute, the Organization of American States and ECLA.

5. Other activities

80. A computerized address file of statistical experts and institutions in the region has been organized, with eight specialized mailing lists. It will be used for the dissemination of documents on methods and communications in each area of concern. Co-ordination of the permanent group of Latin American experts on social accounting and communication with the census experts in the region are achieved by means of the new file.

IV. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

81. The most notable change in the statistical work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was an increase in emphasis on activities designed to assist national statistical development. In addition, progress was made towards the establishment of a statistical data base for the region.

A. New Conference arrangements

82. By decision of the ECA Conference of Ministers, a Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers was created by merging the three previous conferences in those fields. This move was part of a general restructuring of ECA legislative and technical bodies, and its aim was to promote better co-ordination between the three groups of national officials concerned.

83. The first session of the Joint Conference met at ECA headquarters from 24 March to 2 April 1980. It was attended by 93 representatives of 34 African countries, 59 observers and others. By organizing half of the discussions in committee meetings, the Joint Conference was able to complete as much work as the previous separate Conferences.

84. In its recommendations on statistics, the Joint Conference urged African Governments to prepare statistical development programmes for inclusion in their national development plans and to provide adequate counterpart support to the programmes of assistance concerned with household survey capabilities, population censuses and national accounts. It identified improved data analysis as an important factor in ensuring better collaboration between producers and users of statistics and also encouraged the establishment of national statistical data bases. The Joint Conference concluded that its first session had been successful. Its statistics committee, nevertheless, felt it was important to continue the work of the previous Conference of African Statisticians to develop regional activities on a self-reliant and operational basis.

B. Other general aspects of co-ordination and development

85. A further review of statistical organization and staffing throughout the region was undertaken, but results were incomplete owing to loss of questionnaires in the post. The first issue of a directory of African specialists in statistics was prepared in order to facilitate the organization of intergovernmental advisory services. In addition, a further inquiry was made into the use of electronic data processing equipment in African countries.

C. Statistical Training Programme for Africa

86. The regional supporting component of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) was fully staffed with two experts by May 1979. The 10-year

Programme has the general objective of making Africa self-reliant in statistical training. It currently comprises 12 centres providing international services. Membership in the Programme is flexible.

87. The priority objectives of STPA include: better provision of fellowships; training of more local teaching staff; extension of activities at some centres which are providing only limited services for the region; reorientation of teaching programmes in line with the work actually done by statisticians in the region; and development of in-service training for middle-level personnel. Some initial progress was made towards meeting all of these objectives, but the number of fellowships remained below the level required for full performance of the Programme. A meeting of the directors of STPA centres was held at ECA headquarters in October 1979.

D. National accounts, finance and prices

88. To meet the special requirements of the least developed and newly independent countries for assistance in national accounts and related basic series, a new project was approved by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in June 1979 comprising the existing regional adviser and an additional expert. In addition to the normal country missions, a two-week training course in national accounts was organized at Rabat, Morocco, in May 1980.

89. In response to a request made at the tenth session of the Conference of African Statisticians, a review was made of national accounting activities in the region. It was particularly concerned with the co-ordinating function of national accounts in the statistical systems of individual countries and the effective use of the data in development planning. The inquiry showed that national accounting was not making sufficiently rapid progress, and the new Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers decided to make a more detailed examination of the data applications at its second session.

90. Work on the development of a national accounts data base continued as a priority project, and annual series of origin and expenditure data should be available for all countries of the region up to 1979 by the end of 1980. Provisional estimates for 1980 will be made early in 1981. It has been necessary to undertake a considerable amount of work in reconciling the data and estimates compiled at ECA with those available from other sources.

91. As part of its programme to become more directly operational, the Conference of African Statisticians had selected price statistics as a regional priority. A working group, largely financed by African Governments, met in June 1979 and its deliberations were based on papers presented by a number of countries and supporting material from the secretariat. The result was a detailed set of recommendations which countries were invited to apply in the light of their own priorities. However the Joint Conference, not satisfied with this arrangement, felt that the recommendations should be simplified and should give explicit guidance on priorities. Follow-up action is being taken along these lines.

92. Manual compilation of external transactions and public sector data continued, but the material was still too incomplete to warrant the establishment of computerized data files. It is nevertheless intended that some of the material on external transactions be used to provide estimates of gross national product (GNP) in addition to those which already exist for gross domestic product (GDP).

E. External trade statistics and data base operations

93. The reprocessing of African trade statistics in standard quantity and value units is shared by the United Nations Statistical Office and the ECA Statistics Division. The material is stored at the International Computing Centre, Geneva, and most is now also available on magnetic tape and microfiche at ECA headquarters. Its value has already been demonstrated in preparing the regular regional trade publications and in responding to specific requests for information. Series A, B and C of the publication Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa continued as previously but with some delay, mainly owing to printing difficulties.

94. Efforts were made to assist individual countries in improving the timeliness and quality of their trade data, but the situation is not yet satisfactory, particularly with respect to trade index numbers.

95. Since external trade statistics is the bulkiest regular processing operation, ECA regards it as the focal point of its data base development and associates with it the establishment of computerized files in other subject fields. The arrangement has the advantage of making the best use of limited programming capacity.

F. Industrial statistics

96. Work on basic data compilation continued in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office, and exploratory missions to a few African countries served to determine requirements in improving the data. The initial thrust of development in this area will come through participation in the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics for which there is to be a preparatory working group meeting in 1981. However, this is another area in which a concerted regional effort, similar to that in price statistics, will be required.

G. Other economic statistics

97. A study on production and trade in agricultural commodities was completed, but ECA has not yet had the resources to determine the kind of permanent agricultural data file which it should maintain on the basis of material available from FAO and other sources. Manual work continued on a transport and communications data base, but more needs to be known about users' requirements before it is computerized. The position with respect to tourism statistics is similar but is currently relevant to only a few African countries. Follow-up work continued on distribution statistics as a result of the 1978 seminar, which was the first self-reliant project of the Conference of African Statisticians.

98. Regular work on African Statistical Yearbook was maintained but suffered from typing and printing problems. As an intermediate measure the Yearbook was programmed for reproduction by computer in order to solve the typing but not the printing difficulty. An additional consideration is that the Yearbook file does not yet have any direct link with other computerized files in the data base. Two issues of Statistical Information Bulletin were published. The Bulletin deals with both statistical data and methodology in an ad hoc manner and serves mainly as a means of disseminating new material not considered by regional meetings.

H. Demographic and social statistics

99. Work in these areas is closely related to that of the censuses and surveys advisory service described below and is also associated with STPA, the latter being for administrative convenience only.

100. The main development was a notable increase in national interest in civil registration systems following completion of the 1970 round of census operations. A study was undertaken on methods and problems in this area, and support was given to two intergovernmental agencies in preparing a manual and in conducting a training seminar, which was held in May 1979. A regional working group is to meet at Nairobi, Kenya, in July 1980.

101. A report was prepared on social indicators of relevance to Africa to provide preliminary guidelines. In addition, work continued on the development of a demographic and social statistics data base in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and specialized agencies.

I. Censuses and surveys advisory service

1. Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics

102. The Advisory Service is a continuation of the previous UNFPA-financed African Census Programme, which terminated at the end of 1977. It currently comprises two posts in demographic statistics, one each in data processing, sampling and cartography, and two in civil registration. Two of these posts were created during the reporting period.

103. From February 1979 to June 1980, 51 missions were undertaken by the advisers and staff members to assist the 1980 round of population censuses, demographic surveys and civil registration schemes as well as to participate in UNFPA population needs assessment missions.

104. Nearly all African countries have now taken population censuses and so are in a position to broaden the scope of their data collection. The growing interest in civil registration has already been noted above, and there is an even stronger interest in the development of household survey capabilities.

2. African Household Survey Capability Programme

105. The African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) was proposed by the Conference of African Statisticians in 1973, and UNDP approved a small regional supporting component in 1978 with two expert posts. One post was filled in June 1979 and, because of recruitment difficulties, a four-month consultancy was arranged against the second post in the same year. The second post was finally filled in March 1980. The ILO assigned a full-time household survey specialist to work with the ECA team in May 1979, and FAO later made an expert available on a part-time basis. The Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its first session recommended that a data processing adviser should be recruited to assist the work of the team. Steps have been taken to implement this recommendation.

106. The African Programme now forms part of the global National Household Survey Capability Programme, and the over-all objective is to remedy one of the most important gaps in the statistics of developing countries by ensuring integrated and continuing supplies of economic, social and demographic data on households.

107. About half the countries of Africa already have active survey operations, and a few have begun to establish continuing programmes of surveys. At the national level there is a growing link between AHSCP and population censuses, since the latter are a periodic component of survey programmes and also supply the geographical frames for sampling.

108. Work during the reporting period concentrated on assistance to countries in drawing up their survey programmes in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office, and advisory services to current surveys and preliminary work on methodology, mainly connected with survey data requirements, sampling problems and the interrelationship of survey data. A working group on the organization, content and methodology of household surveys met at ECA headquarters in October 1979.

V. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

A. Statistical collection, compilation and analysis

109. Statistical data collection, compilation and dissemination are major activities in the statistics programme of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA). Despite the lack of electronic data processing facilities, statistical series on various demographic, social and economic aspects of the countries of the ECWA region, as well as of other Arab countries, have been prepared for other divisions of the ECWA secretariat and interested researchers. The publications are Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (The third issue, covering the period 1968-1977, was released in February 1980.) and Statistical Indicators of the Arab World (Work on the 1980 issue is in progress.).

B. Statistical development

110. Reports on external trade and industrial statistics in selected ECWA countries have been prepared and others are in preparation for an expert group meeting to be held in December 1980. The meeting is to discuss measures of improving and standardizing trade and industrial statistics in the region.

111. The Commission collaborated with the United Nations Statistical Office in organizing the First Technical Meeting of Arab Statisticians on National Household Surveys. It also participated in the Consultative Meeting on the National Household Survey Capability Programme, held in New York in June 1979, and in the Expert Group on Revision of the United Nations Handbook of Household Surveys, held at Geneva in March 1980. In February 1980, it prepared a project proposal for the establishment of a Household Survey Unit at ECWA, which was submitted to UNDP for financing.

C. National accounts, prices and finance statistics

112. The ECWA Statistics Unit has supplied the substantive divisions of the ECWA secretariat and other international bodies with national accounts estimates for the ECWA and Arab regions at current and constant prices and has published the following:

(a) Bulletin No. 2 on national accounts studies, entitled "Gross domestic product of the ECWA countries throughout the period 1960-1976";

(b) Bulletin No. 1 on price statistics, entitled "Consumer and wholesale price indices in the ECWA region (1960-1977)";

(c) "Draft preliminary estimates of real gross domestic product by kind of economic activity for the Arab world (1960-1977)";

(d) "Summary of the United Nations Manual on National Accounts at Constant Prices".

Bulletin No. 3 on national accounts studies is in press, and preparations for publishing Bulletin No. 2 on price statistics are under way.

D. Technical co-operation

113. Technical assistance was rendered by the regular staff to the following:

(a) Yemen: setting up and publishing, jointly with ECWA, the "National accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic for the years 1969/70-1976/77";

(b) Yemen: UNDP institutional support project, decentralized to ECWA;

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(c) Democratic Yemen: finalizing the first issue of a statistical yearbook, which was published, jointly with ECWA, in January 1980;

(d) Democratic Yemen: standardizing the national accounts statistics compiled for the period 1969-1978, computing the GDP at constant prices for the same period, establishing the basis for drawing up commodity balances and preparing them for major commodities, constructing external trade indices and preparing the consolidated accounts of the State;

(e) Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, Baghdad, Iraq: conducting a working group on national accounts at constant prices and preparing teaching material for and conducting a training workshop on commodity balances and input/output analysis;

(f) Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, Baghdad: providing technical support, since ECWA has assumed the role of Executing Agency for the Institute.

E. Advisory services

114. The regional advisers in statistics provided assistance to the countries of the region in national accounts, household surveys, statistical organization, external trade and industrial statistics. Advisory assistance was also rendered to regional organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Arab Monetary Fund.

115. Lack of regional advisers on data processing, external trade statistics, demographic and social statistics and other important areas of statistics has made it impossible to satisfy all requests of Governments or regional institutions. However, the regional advisers in statistics have made efforts to honour as many requests as possible.

VI. INTER-AMERICAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

116. 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. As a result of a reorganization in the economic and social sector of the general secretariat of OAS, its statistical activities are under the responsibility of two units, as follows:

(a) The Office of the General Secretariat of IASI advises the Executive Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs of OAS on statistical matters, especially with relation to preparations for the Inter-American Statistical Conferences; co-operates in the organization and execution of the Conferences; publishes the journal Estadística; carries out activities related to the formulation, preparation and publication of standards for the Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics (PIEB) and the Program of the Census of America (COTA),

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including consultation with national statistical offices and international organizations; carries out activities related to the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) and its subcommittees; advises on the policy and orientation of the Inter-American Statistical Training Center (CIENES) and participates in the awarding of fellowships for the Center; provides technical assistance at the request of the countries, in co-ordination with other offices of the General Secretariat of OAS.

(b) The Planning and Statistics Program of OAS gives direct technical assistance to member countries in statistical development; prepares and reviews draft standards for PIEB and COTA for presentation to the Office of the General Secretariat of IASI; compiles, maintains, analyses and publishes statistical data; is responsible for training activities in statistics, including the management of CIENES; and arranges the Inter-American Statistical Conferences.

A. Committee on Improvement of National Statistics

117. The Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS), composed of the chief statistical offices of the American nations, held its fourteenth session at Caracas, 23-30 October 1979. The central topic was household surveys, namely, national programmes, technical aspects and regional co-operation and programmes. The agenda also included statistical activities and matters pending from previous sessions, technical co-operation and future work of COINS.

118. Two round tables were held during the session on topics of general interest to the statistical offices of the region, namely, strengthening the national economic accounts and professional staff development for national statistical systems.

119. With regard to statistical co-ordination, there were informal meetings, by subregion, of COINS members from countries belonging to 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.

120. The fifteenth session of COINS is scheduled to be held in the second half of 1981, at the headquarters of IASI, Washington, D.C.

121. The Subcommittee on Transportation and Communications Statistics of COINS held its third session at Washington, D.C., 17-24 October 1978. The agenda included the following topics: consideration of the status of communications statistics in the American region, particularly with respect to the activities carried out during the period 1967-1977 at the world and regional level; study and preparation of the proposal to be submitted to COINS for the formulation of standards and methods pertaining to communications statistics of PIEB: postal services, telecommunications, radio and television broadcasting; and other matters, including future activities of the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's proposals are provisional recommendations until COINS either adopts or modifies them.

B. Program of the 1980 Census of America

122. The IASI secretariat conducted an inquiry among national statistical offices on the status of the census programme, for the purpose of updating and expanding the information available on national activities initiated or envisaged as part of the Program of the 1980 Census of America (COTA-1980), comprising population, housing and agriculture censuses. With regard to the economic censuses, the IASI secretariat will await the development of the activities at the world level before initiating regional proposals.

123. The Institute collaborated in several census training activities carried out in the countries, such as POPSTAN seminars and workshops on censuses of population and housing, organized by the International Statistical Programs Center (ISPC) of the United States Bureau of the Census, as well as in activities carried out by OAS, ECLA, FAO and other agencies.

124. Various training activities on methodology for censuses of population, housing and agriculture were carried out by CIENES.

C. Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics

125. The revised versions of the following sections of the Inter-American Program of Basic Statistics (PIEB), which contain the modifications recommended by COINS subcommittees and approved by COINS, were published: population (part relating to the 1980 censuses); housing (part relating to the 1980 censuses); transportation (parts relating to statistics on road and water transport); and science and technology. The revised versions of other PIEB sections are in preparation and will be published in the near future.

D. Inter-American Household Survey Program

126. In compliance with recommendations of the Inter-American Statistical Conference at its seventh session (Santo Domingo, 1977) and of COINS at its fourteenth session, an Inter-American Household Survey Program is being formulated. The programme is to be an OAS/IASI initiative, conducted by IASI in collaboration with the countries and the international, regional and bilateral agencies. The project will be developed within the framework of the United Nations National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP). Also, as recommended by COINS, the Executive Committee of IASI has established a Subcommittee on Household Survey, whose first session is scheduled to be held in August 1980.

E. International statistical co-ordination

127. The regional statistical activities of OAS and IASI are carried out in close co-ordination, in accordance with the Agreement in force between the two organizations.

128. Efforts for closer and more effective collaboration between the United Nations Statistical Office, ECLA and IASI have been made with satisfactory results. Trilateral meetings of representatives of the three agencies to discuss the co-ordination of their statistical activities have been held. The Institute financed the participation of five experts in a working group meeting on measures of employment and income in urban areas through household surveys, held at Santiago, Chile, in 1979, under the auspices of ECLA. The United Nations Statistical Office and the ECLA Division of Statistics and Quantitative Analysis contributed several documents to the 1979 COINS session.

129. The OAS and ECLA are represented in COINS and its Co-ordinating Board by ex officio members.

F. Technical co-operation

130. During the period under review, technical assistance missions - usually of short duration - were carried out by the Planning and Statistics Program of OAS as follows: Colombia, cadastral statistics; Chile, evaluation of statistical publications, integrated system of labour statistics; Dominican Republic, statistical publications (mission carried out jointly with IASI); El Salvador, censuses of population and housing (COTA-1980), economic censuses, statistical publications; Grenada, statistics for the national planning system; Guatemala, economic and agricultural censuses; Haiti, census cartography; Honduras, sample survey (expenditures for food, external trade statistics); Jamaica, censuses of population and agriculture, data processing; Panama, wholesale price index, national accounts, external trade statistics, transportation census; Paraguay, sampling (Paraguarí); Peru, organization of the national statistical system, sampling, statistical publications; Suriname, statistical organization; Trinidad and Tobago, agricultural and economic statistics and Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), external trade statistics.

G. Statistical training

131. During the period under review, the training activities of CIENES, both at its headquarters at Santiago, Chile and in other countries, were carried out in accordance with the programmes approved. In addition, CIENES professors furnished technical assistance in various countries.

H. Publications

132. The Executive Committee of IASI set up a working group to study policy regarding the journal Estadística, the official organ of IASI - that is, means of increasing the readership of the journal, means of ensuring the co-operation of Latin American authors, and matters relating to printing costs, subscriptions etc. The working group met at Washington, in April 1979, and its recommendations are being implemented. Two issues of Estadística are published each year.

133. In compliance with a recommendation of the General Assembly of OAS at its fifth special session (December 1977), an evaluation of the publications América en Cifras and Boletín Estadístico was made in 1978. It was recommended that they be replaced by two new publications, one annual and the other quarterly. The 1977 edition of América en Cifras was the last one published, and the last issue of the Boletín Estadístico was No. 150, December 1977.

134. The Planning and Statistics Program of OAS is in charge of the new publications, as follows: Synthesis of Economic Performance in Latin America during 1978 and Statistical Bulletin of the OAS (No. 1, January-March 1979; Nos. 2-3, April-September 1979; No. 4, October-December 1979).

135. Publication of the third edition of the series Statistical Activities of the American Nations has continued. During the period under review, the volumes on Colombia, Guatemala and Trinidad and Tobago were published; those on Costa Rica and Paraguay are in preparation.
