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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS:
STATISTICAL WORK OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Statistical work of the specialized agencies

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the statistical activities of the specialized agencies since the twentieth session of the Commission, in February-March 1979.

* E/CN.3/535.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At the twentieth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General entitled "Statistical work of the specialized agencies" (E/CN.3/530). 1/ The present document is the corresponding report on the work done since the twentieth session. A progress report on the regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies (E/CN.3/559) and one on the work of the United Nations Statistical Office (E/CN.3/561) are also before the Commission.

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. 235-237.

I. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

2. One major task of the statistical programme of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is to produce and disseminate international statistical information on labour questions. For this purpose, the ILO published the usual Yearbook of Labour Statistics (latest edition in 1979), the quarterly Bulletin of Labour Statistics and its monthly supplements and the Technical Guides. The 1978 and 1979 Yearbooks contained special tables on total population and labour force by sex and age-group and on the distribution of the labour force cross-classified by occupational and industrial groups, respectively. The 1979 Bulletins contained a new table on normal hours of work per week in selected occupations. A new feature of the Bulletin is the publication of articles on labour statistics, such as recent trends in industrial disputes; the treatment of seasonal items in the computation of consumer price indices; statistics concerning the urban informal sector, labour statistics in the centrally planned economy countries members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA); the international comparability of labour market statistics; durable goods, dwellings and credit in consumer price indices; measuring the distribution of unemployment by income level; occupational injuries by type and major divisions of economic activity in selected countries; and standardization and comparability: an approach to the reformulation of international recommendations.

3. The ILO also issued a new edition of Household Income and Expenditure Statistics, containing results of surveys conducted between 1968 and 1976 in nearly 90 countries, and issued the following analytical articles on labour problems in the form of press releases: Employment crisis, daily bread means how much sweat?; World job crisis - the worst is yet to come?; Work for young: top priority; How much was your money worth yesterday?; The case of the disappearing farmer. Fewer strikes in industrialized market economy countries but more days lost in Europe; A new deal for old hands; Industrial disputes: recent trends in selected countries; Ten years of inflation: ILO maps trends over decade; Demographic pincer closing on industrialized world; Where does your money go?; 40-hour week still an elusive goal for many; Finding the reality in real wages.

4. A second major task of the ILO is to develop and standardize labour statistics. At present, the "core" activity in this field is related to household surveys. A review has been made of international recommendations on the measurement of the labour force, which has led to the presentation of a paper, in July 1979, at the ECE/ILO meeting on concepts and definitions of statistics of the labour force, employment and unemployment in ECE countries and to the preparation of chapters on household employment surveys and household income and expenditure surveys for the forthcoming new edition of the United Nations Handbook of Household Surveys. In addition, the subject of statistics of occupational injuries has been reviewed. Two working documents entitled (a) "Statistics of occupational injuries", analysing the state of national statistics in this field and (b) "A system of basic periodic statistics of occupational injuries", analysing sources, concepts, definitions, classifications, periodicity, etc. in an independent, uniform reporting system of occupational injuries, were prepared for and examined by a meeting of experts.

5. Other activities to be undertaken soon include the organization of a meeting of experts on household surveys, the development of indicators for compilation of statistics on work conditions and environment, the review and analysis of international surveys on and statistics of labour cost, the development of a computerized system to store and retrieve the statistics collected by the ILO and the publication of French and Spanish editions of An Integrated System of Wages Statistics; a Manual on Methods.

6. Concurrently with its research programme on household surveys, the ILO is strengthening its capacity to assist countries in conducting such surveys on topics of concern to the ILO by sending regional household survey experts to Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Western Asia. These experts form part of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) regional team of experts. Their work will complement the ILO programme of direct technical co-operation in individual countries.

II. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

7. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Interlinked Computerized Storage and Processing System (ICS) of assembling, compiling, processing and disseminating food and agricultural statistics now covers about 250 primary crops, livestock and fishery commodities and about 310 processed products derived therefrom, generally up to the first stage of processing for crops and fishery products and to the second stage of processing for livestock products. The data series (five-year average 1961-1965 and individual years 1966 to the present) cover about 200 countries and territories in the form of supply/utilization accounts which attempt, to the extent possible, to ensure consistency, plausibility and comparability. The operation of the system has been improved with the installation of video-terminals for input and retrieval of data.

8. ICS was used to prepare detailed 1975-1977 food balance-sheets for 164 countries, covering almost the entire world population. Each food balance-sheet was supplemented with tables showing the conversion rates applied and the assumption made in arriving at figures in the food balance-sheets. In addition, tables showing long-term series of per capita food supply by food groups in terms of calories, protein, fat and selected minerals and vitamins for the average period 1961-1965 and individual years 1967-1977 were prepared for all countries, continents and economic classes and regions and for the world as a whole.

9. Encouraged by the positive reactions of the countries to the tailored production questionnaires (now prepared by computer to alleviate the burden on countries in filling in questionnaires and checking past years' series in the FAO data base with national records), FAO computer-processed and tailored the quarterly trade questionnaire and the questionnaire on monthly livestock products for each country.

10. Work was initiated on methodological aspects of feed balance-sheets and the testing of the program of the "herd model" for computerization of livestock statistics. Simultaneously, steps were taken to expand the coverage of feed statistics with a view to the possible preparation of feed statements.

11. The computerization of the data series and the streamlining of the publications programme have enabled the Statistics Division, since 1977, to advance the issuance dates of periodical statistical publications - Production Yearbook, Trade Yearbook, Fertilizer Yearbook and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, thus reducing the time-lag between data availability and their publication in internationally comparable form.

12. The results from countries that participated in the 1970 World Census of Agriculture (WCA) continued to be processed as received from countries and published in several issues of the Census Bulletin. Final results from 72 countries had been published by March 1980. During the first quarter of 1981, the results from some countries that carried out censuses within the framework of the 1980 WCA will start to be published.

13. The Report on the Analysis of International Comparison of the Results of the 1970 World Census of Agriculture was issued in 1980 and a preliminary advanced document, incorporating some of the main tabulations, was prepared in 1979 as background information for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD).

14. The participation of developing countries in the 1980 WCA continued to be promoted and assistance was provided to countries that carried out their censuses. Training centres, seminars and special courses with reference to the programme for the 1980 WCA were organized. National census demonstration centres were held in different parts of the world and FAO assisted in preparing the programmes and courses, providing background documents, giving lectures and providing financial support to national institutions for holding the centres and for financing fellows from neighbouring countries.

15. The publication National Methods of Collecting Agricultural Statistics, issued in 1975 with the aim of providing a pool of practical experience in collecting agricultural statistics, was kept up to date through eight Supplements covering some 50 countries.

16. A draft programme of community-level statistics to be promoted in countries in Asia and the Pacific (closely linked with the promotion of the programme of the 1980 WCA) is in preparation and will eventually be one of the basic tools for the follow-up of the statistical implications of the Programme of Action adopted by WCARRD.

17. The activities in crop production estimation and forecasting as an integral part of an early warning system were mainly to provide technical assistance through short-term consultancies, as in the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, and technical support to crop-forecasting projects carried out individually or integrated into ongoing projects in agricultural statistics as in Bangladesh. A draft guide on crop forecasting methodology is being prepared.

18. Under the Technical Co-operation Programme (TCP), assistance was provided to Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Colombia, Guatemala, Madagascar, Suriname and Turkey in project formulation, preparation of agricultural censuses, data processing and training of national personnel.

19. During the reporting period, around 40 field experts per year in about 35 developing countries were engaged in censuses of agriculture, improving current agricultural statistics, assisting in data processing, providing advice in sampling techniques, training in agricultural censuses and surveys and preparing project proposals for the development of agricultural statistics.

20. A major part of the draft glossary of terms used in food and agricultural statistics was issued. A technical document, "Statistical methods for collecting data on post harvest foodgrain losses", was also issued.

21. Work on economic accounts for agriculture is continuing. Following the publication of a report containing production accounts at current prices for 62 countries for the period 1961-1971, a second edition was issued in 1979. In addition to increased country coverage with respect to production accounts at current prices, the new edition includes production accounts at constant prices as well as capital formation accounts both at current and constant prices for a number of countries.

22. The assessment of the world food and nutrition situation undertaken in connexion with the Fourth World Food Survey (1977) is being continually updated. Revisions have been published in the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) and used in the study "Agriculture towards 2000".

23. A draft programme of statistics of food consumption and nutrition was prepared, taking into consideration the requirements of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), for finalization in 1980. A draft manual of food consumption surveys is expected to be issued towards the end of 1980.

24. The work on social indicators has received fresh impetus as a result of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action of WCARRD. Work is in progress on the development of socio-economic indicators for monitoring and evaluating results of agrarian reform and rural development and providing assistance to countries in implementing the required data collection programme. The work is to be implemented by FAO as the lead agency in co-operation with all international agencies concerned.

25. Collaborative work is being undertaken for the development of clinical and anthropometric data for the rapid assessment of the nutritional situation of countries.

26. Work is in hand on the revision of estimates and projections of agricultural population and labour force, following the availability of the 1978 assessment of the total population estimates and projections (covering the period 1950-2000) by the United Nations Population Division.

27. Special emphasis is placed on the development of producer price series as the basis for the construction of national index numbers of agricultural production, preparation of economic accounts for agriculture and other related activities. Compilation of these prices has become a regular feature and data are processed by

computer. In addition, a technical manual on prices paid and on prices received by farmers, to serve as guidelines for countries, will be issued before the end of 1980. Work to evaluate the use of exchange rates as compared with purchasing power parities in calculating regional and world indices has been initiated.

28. Work is continuing on the compilation of data on support prices for major agricultural products in the context of the monitoring of progress of international agricultural adjustment.

29. The work on the compilation of subnational administrative area data on population and land use and their reclassification by agro-ecological zones continued as part of the project on land resources for population of the future, funded by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

30. Work is being done on a project on statistics on women's contribution to agricultural production. The project aims at a study of the inadequacies of the data on women's role and is developing a module for collecting more appropriate data in conjunction with national household surveys.

31. The basic structure of the Yearbook of Forest Products has been maintained to include annual data for 12 years on production, trade and the average unit value in trade of forest products, together with tables on the direction of trade for two years. During 1980, particular effort is being directed to the improvement of estimates of the production of fuelwood and charcoal in view of the importance of wood as a source of energy in developing countries. Pulp and Paper Capacities, including estimates of the investment in new capacity in this sector, is published annually. This is backed up with a publication listing specific mill investments. From 1981, it is hoped the data will be fully incorporated into the computer data bank. World Production Capacities Plywood, Particleboard and Fibreboard 1976-1981, the latest assessment of the capacity of the wood-based panels industry, was published in 1980. Forest Product Prices 1960-1978, the second issue in this annual series, was published in 1980. These data, which are fully computerized, are being analysed with a view to the development of international prices indices. Series of forest product prices of international significance are included in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics. The monthly Tropical Forest Products in World Timber Trade includes volume and direction of trade and prices of tropical timber.

32. Field experts have assisted countries in the development of systems for the collection and presentation of statistics of the forestry sector and in surveying consumption of wood as material and fuel. A continuous effort is made in the development of national assessments of forest resources. An assessment of tropical forest resources has been compiled and the application of remote sensing "Landsat" information to forest resources surveys has been developed under joint FAO/United Nations Environment Programme projects. A forestry inventory data processing system has been developed and applied in a number of countries.

33. During the reporting period, the following volumes of the Yearbook of Fishery Statistics have been published: volume 44 (Catches and landings, 1976); volume 45 (Fishery commodities, 1976); volume 46 (Catches and landings, 1978) and volume 47

(Fishery commodities, 1978). Volume 48 (Catches and landings, 1979) will be published in December 1980.

34. In connexion with the computerization of the fishery commodities data base, the Fisheries Department has prepared an International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishery Products on the basis of the Standard International Trade Classification, Rev.2, and of the Nomenclature of Goods for the External Trade Statistics of the European Community and Statistics of Trade between member States (NIMEXE). The computerization programme is at present under way and it is planned to publish volume 49 of the Yearbook of Fishery Statistics (Fishery commodities, 1979) by automatic data-processing techniques during the first half of 1981.

35. A draft document on quantity conversion factors has recently been finalized. It shows the conversion factors applied nationally to calculate the live weight of the fish from the corresponding landed weight and from the net weight of fish products processed on board or in shore-based plants. The document will be submitted to national statistical offices for comment, revision and the insertion of additional factors.

36. The tenth session of the Interagency Co-ordinating Working Party on Atlantic Fishery Statistics is to be held at Madrid, Spain, from 22 to 29 July 1980.

III. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

A. Statistics on education

37. Two major studies on education trends and projections were prepared and presented at two regional ministerial conferences convened by UNESCO covering Latin America and the Caribbean, and the European region respectively, while a study on wastage in primary education was presented at the International Conference on Education at its thirty-seventh session. Several other statistical studies were completed covering topics such as educational finance, the development of pre-primary and primary education, the participation of females in education, foreign students, trends and projections of the population of school age and on wastage in primary and general secondary education. A programme of holding annually four national and two subregional training seminars on education projection methods has been carried out since 1977. The seminars, designed to improve the technical capacity of nationals involved in education statistics and planning, have been particularly well received by member States. Work on the revision of the 1977 projections of enrolment by level of education and by age-groups (until the year 2000) has been initiated.

38. Member States of UNESCO showed considerable interest in the methodological publications of the Office of Statistics on literacy programmes and adult education. Pilot projects on the collection of statistics on literacy and other adult education programmes were carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Jamaica, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania. Similar projects were initiated in seven other countries.

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39. The 1958 Recommendation on the International Standardization of Education Statistics was revised by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twentieth session, in 1978. In addition to the national handbooks on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) previously issued for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Egypt, Peru and the Sudan, UNESCO issued one for Mauritius and prepared a draft for one on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

B. Statistics on science and technology

40. In 1978, the UNESCO General Conference, at its twentieth session, adopted a Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Statistics on Science and Technology, which laid down a legal basis for further work in this field of statistics, aimed at the improvement of international comparability of data. With the help of a meeting of experts, a draft manual for statistics on science and technology, explaining in operational terms the recommended standards, was prepared and will serve as a basic methodological tool for national statistical services in the member States wishing to implement the Recommendation. At the same time, the survey questionnaire to be used starting in 1980 for the collection of internationally comparable statistics on human and financial resources devoted to research and development (R and D) has been re-drafted in line with the Recommendation and field-tested in several countries. Methodological improvement and expansion of data collection on R and D was pursued; data are being entered into the data bank to be used, through a quick retrieval system, in the preparation of statistical studies and reports. Two pilot projects were conducted in selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the harmonization of their data collection methods with those recommended by UNESCO, resulting in two studies to be published in 1980. A document on estimation of human and financial resources devoted to R and D at the world and regional level was prepared and presented at the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development. A feasibility study was done on the collection of data relating to scientific and technological information and documentation services. As a follow-up to the Recommendation, a regional seminar on the implementation of statistical standards and methods of data collection on scientific and technological activities was organized for statisticians from nine Asian member States, and preparatory work on a similar seminar for participants from Latin American countries is in progress.

C. Statistics on culture and communication

41. UNESCO has pursued its activities for extending the scope of cultural statistics in order to cover new fields such as the theatre, public expenditure for cultural activities, archives and music. In 1978, UNESCO conducted a statistical survey of the theatre, the first it carried out in this field. In pursuance of a resolution of the General Conference of UNESCO on the advisability of having a recommendation on the international standardization of statistics on public expenditure for cultural activities, a committee of governmental experts

met in April 1980 to prepare a draft recommendation for the consideration of the General Conference at its twenty-first session to be held at Belgrade in September and October 1980. In 1979, an international pilot survey on archival institutions and record centres statistics (1978/79) was carried out jointly by UNESCO and the International Council on Archives; the results were discussed at the nineteenth International Round Table on Archives, in November 1979. Another pilot survey, which related to the feasibility of collecting statistics on music, was carried out in 1980.

42. The second joint UNESCO/ECE meeting on cultural statistics took place at Geneva in April 1979, and discussed mainly the scope of the Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) developed by UNESCO as part of the United Nations Framework for the integration of Social and Demographic Statistics (FSDS).

43. Another concern of UNESCO in this field has been the construction of cultural indicators both within the context of FCS (see para. 42 above) and of the setting up of a European cultural data bank, which was recommended by the Conference in Co-operation and Security in Europe held at Helsinki. The construction of the statistical component of the data bank has been entrusted to the UNESCO Office of Statistics. A meeting of experts on statistics and indicators of culture took place at Vienna in December 1979 and dealt with both FCS and the projected European cultural data bank.

D. Statistical data bank

44. The statistical data bank has been expanded and now covers all major statistical data of concern to UNESCO. As a result, virtually the entire UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, as well as an increasing number of other statistical data reports, are now produced from the bank.

45. The introduction of a text-handling package within the UNESCO computer system has permitted the utilization of computer terminals as a tool in the preparation of statistical reports. On the one hand, the explanatory texts and foot-notes for the Yearbook and for other reports are now entered directly on terminals; they are then edited, corrected and eventually merged with the corresponding tabular material in final page format. On the other hand, the use of the package as an adjunct to the final formatting of tables has proved advantageous, particularly for last-minute changes to tables without the more cumbersome and expensive batch operations previously used.

46. As from the 1978-1979 edition of the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, the various elements (tables, texts, titles etc.) are being photocomposed from computer output, thus permitting a more attractive presentation at little increase in cost and with the possibility of ultimately being able to produce the entire volume without the need for manual intervention once the computer output has been prepared. As from the 1980 edition, the reference year shown in the title of the Yearbook will be the year of publication, thus eliminating a source of confusion to users of the volume.

E. Technical co-operation

47. With the purpose of developing the statistical services and infrastructure of member States in the statistical areas within the UNESCO field of competence, technical co-operation activities were maintained, mainly with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme and other extrabudgetary resources. About 10 experts, working mostly in education statistics, continued to be assigned to individual countries and consultant services were provided upon request. UNFPA - a project relating to the organization of training seminars on methods of projecting school enrolment (see para. 37 above) and supported by UNFPA was implemented as scheduled.

48. Under the regular budget, technical co-operation in statistics consisted of two posts (three until mid-1979) of statisticians based in the Regional Offices for Education and consultants' missions, training seminars, fellowships and financial assistance to national services dealing with statistics on education, science and technology and culture and communication.

IV. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

49. In June 1979, the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) decided that the seventh session of the Statistics Division should be convened in 1981. The Division, which is a representative body of all contracting States and interested international organizations, meets every five or six years to review the whole statistical programme of ICAO. The recommendations of the Division are subject to approval by the Council.

50. A meeting of the Statistics Panel was held in June 1978; the next meeting is expected to be held in the fourth quarter of 1980. The Panel is a small group of statistical experts whose primary function is to provide impartial advice with respect to the resolution of technical problems.

51. Important developments took place in the field of traffic-flow statistics. The experimental collection of on-flight origin and destination statistics reached an adequate level of participation and a new Digest of Statistics was introduced; eight quarterly digests in this series had been published by February 1980. The experimental collection has been extended for the time being. The long-established collection of traffic by flight-stage statistics has been maintained in parallel with the on-flight origin and destination programme since efforts to find suitable alternative means of collecting aircraft capacity and operational data have proved unsuccessful. The future of the whole traffic-flow statistics programme will be examined by the Statistics Division in 1981.

52. The first experimental collection of financial statistics for international airports, for the year 1976, was published in the form of an ICAO circular together with the corresponding financial and traffic statistics for en-route air navigation facilities and services. The future status of the airport financial data programme will be determined by the ICAO Council after its review by the 1981 session of the Statistics Division.

53. With the aim of reducing the statistical reporting burden on small-scale commercial air carriers, a simplified reporting system has been introduced and, beginning with data for 1979, small carriers are required to file only one composite form giving summary information on their fleets and traffic.

54. The annual statistical survey of general aviation activities and civilian pilot licences, which was introduced starting with 1977 data, has been successfully established. The information collected has been published in Civil Aviation Statistics of the World, which has become a regular annual publication; it presents, in one volume, the most widely used statistical information on various aspects of civil aviation, comprehensive and detailed information being available in the various Digests of Statistics.

55. As in past years, a special statistical report on airline finances was compiled for the Universal Postal Union. Air transport statistics have been regularly provided to the United Nations Statistical Office for publication in its Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and Statistical Yearbook.

56. A library of statistical publications relating to civil aviation has been maintained as a central source of information for the ICAO secretariat, as well as users in contracting States. A bibliographic service, to facilitate the use of the material, is expected to be introduced in the near future.

57. Informal statistical workshops were held at Lima in July 1978, at Cairo and Arusha in October 1978 and at Mexico City in August 1979. The workshops are organized for the purpose of giving an opportunity to participants working in civil aviation statistics to have informal discussions on statistical problems with other participants and with the ICAO secretariat. A regular programme of two workshops each year in different regions of the world has been maintained. Workshops at Bangkok and Dakar are planned for the second half of 1980. Additional assistance in improving the statistical capabilities of civil aviation departments, airports and airlines was provided by staff of the ICAO regional offices, both through regular missions to the respective States and, when required, through short courses on air transport statistics.

58. The world-wide coverage of the statistics regularly reported to ICAO having been maintained at a highly satisfactory level, and most of the principal series having been computerized, increasing attention has been given to the qualitative aspects. The over-all quality of the data published by ICAO is of course determined by the quality of the primary data reported by States. As a first step, therefore, a systematic evaluation of the primary data has been started by examining the relationships between the different types of data, such as traffic and financial, reported for the same airline or airport. Cross-checks are made between the different sources of the same or similar data. Qualitative assessment is necessarily a complex procedure and a continuous effort is required both in its application and in refining the methods.

V. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

59. The member States of WHO decided in 1977 that the main social target of Governments and WHO in the coming decades should be the attainment by all citizens of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that will permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life. Subsequently, the International Conference on Primary Health Care, held at Alma Ata, USSR, in 1978, adopted a Declaration in which primary health care was identified as the key to reaching the goal for the year 2000. The goal was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 in resolution 34/58 on health as an integral part of development.

60. Relevant and timely statistical information is crucial to decision making. National capabilities for generating such information are, however, far from adequate in many of the countries. A major concern of the countries is therefore to develop, improve and orient their health information systems to support health planning, management, evaluation and research for the attainment of the health goal. Consequently, the WHO health statistics programme is geared to co-operation with member States in this endeavour. The programme covers the entire range of activities corresponding to the statistical policy objectives approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission. 2/

61. The core of the health statistics programme lies in direct technical co-operation with countries. WHO has long been co-operating with countries to develop and strengthen health statistical services and this activity will continue as required. However, a new trend emerged in the 1970s when the need for integrated and cohesive health management was recognized, leading to larger and more comprehensive health projects of technical co-operation, in contrast to separate and small specialized projects. In line with this trend, there has been a growing demand for health statistics to be dealt with as a component of larger projects for strengthening national health services.

62. The urgent task of health information systems to meet the need of health management was reviewed recently in a series of meetings, such as the fourth European Conference on Health Statistics, held in Luxembourg in August 1979; consultative meetings on the concept and principles of national health information systems, held at New Delhi in December 1978, at Washington, D.C., in February 1979 and at San José, Costa Rica, in November 1979. These meetings will be followed up during the period 1980-1981 in regional meetings so as to develop concrete plans of action in countries.

63. Education and training have always been given high priority in technical co-operation with countries. About 100 fellowships have been awarded every year to health statisticians for training abroad. A number of training courses, workshops and seminars have been organized as country and intercountry projects. An increasing emphasis is being given to technical co-operation among developing countries. The need is stressed for bringing users and producers of health statistics together and for motivating medical and administrative personnel in

2/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979 Supplement No. 3 (E/1979/23), para. 220.

the collection and utilization of relevant information in decision making. In addition, recent activities have focused on teacher training. A Manual for Teachers of Medical Students was published in 1978 in collaboration with the International Epidemiological Association. The report of an interregional conference held in 1978 on this topic was published under the title The Successful Teaching of Statistics to Every Medical Student and was distributed to every medical school in the world. Intensive activities are being undertaken to follow up that conference.

64. Among the projects organized with the financial assistance of UNFPA, namely the studies on infant and childhood mortality and their relation to fertility, which were carried out in Afghanistan, Algeria, Sierra Leone and the Sudan, have been completed and reports are being published. WHO will continue its collaboration with other countries on this subject. In June 1979, a meeting was held at Mexico City on socio-economic determinants and consequences of mortality and the proceedings were published. A joint meeting with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on mortality in Asia is planned for December 1980 at Manila. A project on family life cycle is in progress to study the dynamic interlink between family patterns and health. Two new projects were started in 1980 to follow up these developments, namely, (a) a joint United Nations/WHO programme of mortality studies and (b) a project on monitoring trends and differentials of maternal and child health.

65. In the field of cancer statistics, a meeting on cancer statistics in developing countries is planned for 1981.

66. In order to support technical co-operation with countries, a number of activities have been implemented, including the development of statistical standards, the international data-base services, support services on statistical methodology and co-ordination with other international agencies.

67. In the area of standardization, WHO has been developing guidelines for the reorientation of statistical services to support health management, for example, manuals on health manpower statistics, health surveys, mortality analysis, health indicators and other methodological topics. Regarding classifications, the ninth revision of the International Classification of Diseases became effective in 1979. Major publications issued include the Basic Tabulation List with Alphabetical Index and the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps. The usefulness of these classifications will be the subject of evaluation during 1981.

68. A 1979 meeting on classification of diseases recommended that the classification programme should be reoriented away from physician-based diagnoses and towards health problems as they are reported by persons at the periphery of primary health care systems. Following this recommendation, plans have been made for collaborating centres to be set up in the African, South-East Asian and Western Pacific regions to deal with classification problems in primary health care. This development will be in line with the recent trend of emphasizing the use of lay reporting of health information, a subject on which a booklet was published by WHO in 1978. Since health problems and the organization of primary

health care systems differ widely from one country to another, the booklet does not attempt to propose a universally applicable scheme; instead, it sets out the steps that need to be taken in order to create a lay reporting system adapted to the needs and circumstances of particular countries. Regional meetings are planned during the period 1980-1983 to make such adaptations for interested countries.

69. With respect to international data bases, WHO has continued to collect major health statistics from countries, build up data bases, analyse the data and disseminate the results. As more countries are now sending data on computer tape, the timeliness of the publications, World Health Statistics Annual and World Health Statistics Quarterly, has improved. The Annual contains basic data relating to vital statistics, causes of death, infectious disease morbidity, health personnel and hospital establishments. The Quarterly, on the other hand, contains analytical statistical reports on health topics of current interest. To advise WHO on the improvement of the Quarterly, an editorial board of national experts was set up in 1979.

70. The Sixth Report on the World Health Situation, based on the period 1973-1977, was published in 1980. Part I has a global analysis, and part II a review by country and area.

71. In respect of methodological support, services have been provided to various health projects undertaken jointly by countries and WHO. The topics included disease prevalence surveys, cohort studies, laboratory and field studies of prophylactic, therapeutic and rehabilitative measures, and operational research and systems analysis, including computer simulation of disease dynamics. The major health problems covered were acute bacterial diseases, tuberculosis, leprosy, treponematoses, malaria, schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis, blindness, cardio-vascular disease, mental health, human reproduction, family health and health manpower development. Many of these problems were dealt with in the context of primary health care.

72. Progress in statistical work requires sustained, long-term efforts so as to build up national infrastructure step by step. WHO will strengthen its co-operation with countries by adopting a new approach that stresses the effective use of lay reporting at the primary health care level and by reorienting supportive activities accordingly.

VI. WORLD BANK

73. The statistical programme of the World Bank expanded during the past two years. The Bank has continued to collect and process data on external debt and capital flow statistics. In addition, some new initiatives were taken in industrial statistics, purchasing power comparisons and income distribution. Dissemination of data increased in scope over the period under review. In technical co-operation, the Bank continued to provide modest support to its member Governments. Much closer co-operation has been achieved with the United Nations Statistical Office and the specialized agencies.

74. The Debtor Reporting System, operated in co-operation with the regional development banks in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the Capital Markets System, run in co-operation with the Ad Hoc Group of Financial Statisticians of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, have been expanded. Detailed information on medium- and long-term external public and publicly guaranteed debt is now being collected from 105 developing countries. In addition, aggregated data on non-guaranteed private debt is collected from 25 countries. The amount of private debt that is not being reported or for which country estimates are not available is small. Efforts have been made to improve the timeliness of debt data and the transmission of the data in machine-readable form.

75. In 1979, the Bank commenced work on developing a consistent set of industrial statistics using United Nations Statistical Office data supplemented by data from national sources. The objective is to be able to combine industrial statistical information with data on trade in manufactures for use in analytical work related to market shares of developing country exports of manufactures to developed countries and among developing countries.

76. In keeping with the Bank's interest in developing measures for international purchasing power comparisons, as reflected by its support of the International Comparison Project, the Bank has launched a research effort which will test the feasibility of undertaking comparisons based on limited information.

77. Work on income distribution, an area in which the Bank has done pioneering work in the past, has been expanded. A two-year programme, which will lead to the evaluation and compilation of internationally comparable estimates of income distribution, was launched in 1979. This task is being closely co-ordinated with the International Labour Office and the United Nations Statistical Office.

78. In a related initiative, the Bank has commenced a study which will lead to the development of approaches to the measurement of living standards. The Bank proposes to take stock of the existing conceptual framework and then to refine concepts of income and expenditures and how these relate to individual welfare, on the one hand, and to the broad aggregates of national accounting, on the other. Field testing of alternative formulations is planned. In addition, alternative survey methods and how the processing of survey data can be facilitated will be tested. The Bank is co-ordinating its work with the United Nations Statistical Office and the relevant specialized agencies.

79. Dissemination of data has received considerable attention. Three issues of the World Development Report, incorporating a comprehensive statistical annex entitled "World development indicators", have been issued. A second edition of World Tables was released in 1980. The Bank has continued to publish the World Bank Atlas and World Debt Tables annually. In addition, data on commodity prices and quarterly supplements to the World Debt Tables are published. Statistical information published in the above publications is also made available to users in machine-readable form.

80. Although the technical co-operation activities of the Bank are modest, technical assistance has been provided to member Governments, largely through country missions, in order to enable improvements in data collection and reporting. In addition, Bank staff and, in some instances, specially recruited consultants have reviewed the statistical services of developing countries and advised on needed improvements. Bank staff in the course of country economic work have also assisted national statistical offices to revise and improve their national accounts series. The Bank has continued to fund projects which have small statistical components.

81. Through close co-ordination, collaboration and exchange of data with the United Nations Statistical Office and the specialized agencies, the Bank has endeavoured to improve and expand its data base particularly in trade and social statistics.

VII. INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

82. The Bureau of Statistics has continued efforts to improve the collection and compilation of statistics relevant to analyses of international payments problems, which are maintained in its data-base system, the Data Fund, and reported in its statistical publications.

83. Improvements in data collection have been achieved by extensive use of cable communications with statistical correspondents, by expanding the use of reporting via machine-readable magnetic tapes and by continuing review and improvement in the statistical report forms and questionnaires used for data transmittal.

84. The coverage and composition of statistics collected and compiled by IMF remain under review for the purpose of meeting the current requirements of users of its Data Fund and publications. Work is in process towards improvement or development of statistics on commercial banks' foreign assets and liabilities, eurocurrency statistics, labour market, capacity utilization and inventory statistics, as well as improved data on country imports of crude and refined petroleum. In co-operation with other international statistical organizations, the Bureau staff are actively engaged in developing revised and improved statistical standards and methodologies.

85. Since the publication of the fourth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual in 1977, work has continued on conversion of the presentation of statistics to be consistent with its precepts. The project, though complex, is expected to be

completed during 1980. Work is in process towards simplification of data reporting by countries which publish balance-of-payments statistics in a format different from the standard of the Manual. In the past, these countries were asked to use the standard Manual report forms for transmittal of data to IMF; now, several countries are encouraged to report data in the national format, which is then converted to the standard by IMF staff. Work on this aspect of data collection will continue.

86. The Government Finance Statistics Yearbook reports detailed annual data covering operations of the budgetary and extrabudgetary units of central government and social security institutions and summary data for state and local governments. Government finance statistics are published on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis in International Financial Statistics but, in some cases, the data refer to the budgetary central government only. Efforts are under way to expand the coverage of the annual data reported in International Financial Statistics and, with the help of the IMF statistical correspondents, to reconcile the statistics published in International Financial Statistics and the Government Finance Statistics Yearbook.

87. A first draft of a manual on monetary and banking statistics has been prepared and is under discussion within the Bureau of Statistics; work on this project continues for the purpose of producing a document for broader discussion in the near future.

VIII. UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

A. General

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

B. New policy

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

C. Results

90. The results attained by the end of March 1980 can be summarized as follows:

(a) A revised list of some 200 items of Statistique des services postaux was drawn up in October 1974, the definitions and methods of collection specified for each;

(b) In order to get the postal employees responsible for providing statistical data acquainted with the new questionnaire, an instruction manual was published in 1975;

(c) Since then, postal statistics in the new form of loose-leaf binders have been published for the years 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978. Beginning 1976, data furnished by the postal administrations have been submitted to an automatic logical and chronological control;

(d) Statistical data, collected and published in the annual UPU publication since 1964, have been stored in machine-readable form;

(e) Utilizing this data base, the International Bureau of UPU prepares an Annual Report on the Situation of Postal Services, the first of which was published in 1977 analysing data up to 1975, the second in 1978 for data of 1976. The 1977 and 1978 reports are in preparation;

(f) A consultative group of statisticians has been created to give technical advice to the International Bureau;

(g) Most national postal administrations have indicated their liaison service on statistical matters.

IX. WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

A. General

91. The importance of industrial property statistics in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and in its predecessor, Bureaux internationaux réunis pour la protection de la propriété intellectuelle (BIRPI), has been recognized since the creation of BIRPI in 1884. The publication of the industrial property statistics of member States in the journal Industrial Property/La propriété industrielle has been assured since 1885.

92. The extent of the statistical data has, during the course of the years, increased and led, in 1964, to a separate publication entitled Industrial Property Statistics.

93. In 1974, the principle of broadening the statistics to include breakdowns according to 32 technical fields for patent and like documents and to 42 classes of goods and services for marks was accepted.

B. Publications

94. Industrial Property Statistics (Publication A) was published through 1976 and presented international statistical series on industrial property rights for nearly 100 countries. It included data on the applications and the grants of patents, inventors' certificates, utility models, plant varieties and industrial designs as well as on applications for and registrations of trademarks and service marks and on registrations of international marks. For each of the industrial property rights applied for or granted in the reporting country, a breakdown was given according to the country of origin of the resident. Data were given for the latest available year for all the series except "patents in force", for which historical annual data for the past decade and updated total number of patents in force were published. The utility models, plant varieties, trademarks and service marks and industrial designs "in force" were listed together with the corresponding data of the previous year.

95. Industrial Property Statistics (Publication B) contains the same statistical data as those previously included in Publication A, as well as:

(a) A breakdown of patent and inventors' certificate applications and grants according to 32 technical subject-matter fields defined in terms of the International Patent Classification (IPC);

(b) A breakdown of trademark and service mark applications and registrations according to the 42 classes of goods and services defined in terms of the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks (Nice Classification);

(c) A breakdown of patents, utility models, trademarks and service marks and industrial designs according to priority claims under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property;

(d) A survey of pending patent and inventors' certificate applications;

(e) A breakdown of the patents and inventors' certificates granted according to the year of filing of the application.

C. Computerization

96. The computerization of procedures for reviewing and disseminating the industrial property data reported by countries has been finalized. To this end, all data, all routine calculations, including arithmetical verification, and all type-setting requirements are now being computerized. As a result, the issues of Industrial Property Statistics (from 1976 on) are printed by photocomposition techniques from the machine-readable data base.

D. Survey

97. The data of Industrial Property Statistics back to 1970 are being included in the data base and will permit the study of the main trends of industrial property in many countries. A survey, giving comparative statistical tables and containing an analysis of inventive activity using industrial property statistics, will be issued within the next two years.

E. Assessment

98. Introducing computerization has enabled WIPO to issue a more exhaustive publication at an earlier stage, with more reliable data. Further, the information contained is more easily used by the public and has been made more comprehensive. Apart from the compilation of the statistics, the computerization will allow WIPO to undertake more elaborate studies of economic tendencies.

X. GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

A. Tariff and trade data base

99. The tariff and trade data base, which is required in the trade negotiations and in the follow-up of the agreements, is updated regularly. The customs tariff data now cover, in addition to the rates in force, the concessional rates agreed in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the import statistics also include 1978. The data are collected from national authorities. From this documentation, a series of analytical tables was produced to enable both developed and developing contracting parties to carry out an assessment of the results of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Copies of the basic files are currently made available to participating Governments. The data base was extensively used during the negotiations by the participating Governments, first in order to test tariff reduction formulae prepared in the negotiations and, later on, to assess the importance of the various offers.

B. Statistics on textiles

100. The regular reporting scheme of textile and apparel statistics is designed to meet the requirements of the Textiles Committee under the Arrangement Regarding International Trade in Textiles. Under this scheme, quarterly statistics on production and trade in textile and apparel products of cotton, wool and man-made fibres, as well as quarterly employment statistics and annual value added and investment statistics for the textile industry and the apparel industry, are supplied by countries participating in this Arrangement. The submissions are available to participating Governments. The statistics are used in the preparation of reports to the Committee and provide background documentation on textile production and trade to the members of the Arrangement.

C. Other statistical work

101. The compilation of statistics or background documentation for studies on current problems in the field of commercial policy, which the contracting parties or their subsidiary bodies require, as well as the background statistics required for the regular analysis of world trade, have accounted for a significant part of the statistical work of the secretariat. In general, such documentation covers various fields of world production, trade and prices and is, as far as possible, based on published statistics. Extensive use is being made, in particular, of the United Nations Statistical Office trade data tapes.
