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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS

Statistical Office of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present document is a progress report, presented for the information of the Commission, on the work of the Statistical Office since the twentieth session of the Commission, in February-March 1979. The activities are described using the structure of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981.

* E/CN.3/535.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At the twentieth session, the Commission considered a progress report by the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations Statistical Office (E/CN.3/531). 1/ The present document is the corresponding report on the work done since the twentieth session. For the first time, it follows the structure of the programme budget 2/ rather than the organizational structure of the Statistical Office. The new structure for the progress report was agreed to by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination of the Statistical Commission at its eighth session, held at Geneva, on 29 and 30 October 1979 (E/CN.3/536, para. 46). Another document, containing the draft medium-term plan for the six-year period 1984-1989, as well as the work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1982-1983 (E/CN.3/562), is also before the Commission. The Commission is referred to the other documents listed in the provisional agenda (E/CN.3/535) for supplementary information on the work of the Office.

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2. A progress report on the regional conferences of statisticians and similar bodies (E/CN.3/559) and one on the statistical work of the specialized agencies (E/CN.3/560) 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. 238-245.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6, vol. I (A/34/6), para. 6.56.

I. INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY, NATURAL
RESOURCES AND ENERGY (SUBPROGRAMME 1)

A. Industrial, construction and distributive-trade statistics:
collection, compilation and dissemination - recurrent
publications (programme element 1.1)

3. The collection and compilation of data on industrial production, construction and distributive trades for publication in the Yearbook of Industrial Statistics, the Yearbook of Construction Statistics, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and the Statistical Yearbook are done on a continuing basis.

4. In 1979, the 1977 edition of volume I of the Yearbook of Industrial Statistics was published. 3/ It contained annual data through 1976 on major indicators of industrial activity for 94 countries and indexes of industrial production and employment for the world and regions. The 1978 edition will be issued in 1980, covering general data through 1977 on the industrial activity of 98 countries.

5. A data base covering data for 1953 and for 1958 onward has been established for most of the countries included in the Yearbook of Industrial Statistics. Data are available on two tapes, one covering the years through 1966 and the second, the years from 1967 onward.

6. In 1979, a special compilation of industrial statistics - covering the participation of countries in the 1973 World Programme of Industrial Statistics - was published. 4/ It contained census-type data for 54 countries and provided a more detailed profile of the structure of industry than it is feasible to publish in the Yearbook.

7. In 1979, the 1977 edition of volume II of the Yearbook of Industrial Statistics was published. 5/ It contained annual commodity detail from 1968 through 1977 on 535 industrial commodities for about 200 countries. The 1978 edition will be issued in 1980, covering approximately the same number of commodities and countries. The information at the commodity level supplements the information presented on an industry basis in volume I and provides a more specific indication of the nature and importance of the industrial activities undertaken in each country.

8. Annual commodity series starting in 1958 are stored in a data base on two tapes, one covering data through 1964 and the second, data from 1965 onward.

3/ Yearbook of Industrial Statistics, 1977, vol. I, General Industrial Statistics (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.9).

4/ The 1973 World Programme of Industrial Statistics: Summary of Data from Selected Countries (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVIII.3).

5/ Yearbook of Industrial Statistics, 1977, vol. II, Commodity Production Data, 1968-1977 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.10).

9. Monthly, quarterly and annual indexes of industrial production and annual indexes of industrial employment and labour productivity for the world, regions, country groupings and selected countries are compiled on a continuing basis. Value added and employment estimates for 1975, covering 150 countries, are utilized as weights for the indexes. Production indexes re-based to 1975 were published for the first time in the November 1979 issue of the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics.

10. Basic data for the compilation of production indexes are collected from 113 countries through computerized pre-filled questionnaires, of which data for 72 countries are reported in index form and the rest in the form of quantum indicators. In addition, production figures for four countries are also used to supplement the data from questionnaires. The calculation of production indexes in their final form is computerized. However, some manual calculation is required, particularly for estimates from incomplete and outdated national data.

11. The publication of indexes of industrial production and employment in volume I of the Yearbook of Industrial Statistics, the Statistical Yearbook and the February, May, August and November issues of the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics continued during the period 1979-1980.

12. The sixth issue of the Yearbook of Construction Statistics was published in 1979. 6/ It contained annual data from 1968 to 1977 on major indicators of construction activity for 122 countries. The seventh issue, containing 1969-1978 data, will be issued in 1980. The information presented in the Yearbook is prepared from replies received from countries in response to the questionnaire on construction statistics and supplemented by data from national publications.

13. It is expected that the computerization of the processing and storage of the data, now in progress, will contribute to a better assessment of the quality and comparability of the data and make possible the flexible retrieval of information. Pre-filled questionnaires and computer print-outs for photo-offset and publication are expected to be available in 1981.

14. The compilation and publication of distributive-trade and services statistics continued on a limited basis during the period 1979-1980. Data on a few items were compiled and published for a number of countries on the wholesale, retail and service trades.

B. Standards and methods of industrial, construction and distributive-trade statistics (programme element 1.2)

15. A final draft of a future publication entitled Recommendations on the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics is available to Commission members in two parts: Part I. General Statistical Objectives; and Part II. Organization and

6/ Yearbook of Construction Statistics, 1968-1977 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.15).

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Conduct of Industrial Surveys (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/71, Part I and Part II). A summary of the content of Parts I and II is before the Commission in document "Draft international recommendations on the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics" (E/CN.3/537).

16. A revised and updated set of international recommendations for industrial statistics will be completed in draft form towards the end of 1980.

17. A study on country practices in the compilation of distributive-trade and services statistics was initiated in 1980. On the basis of this study, expanded compilation of international statistics will be considered.

18. In 1980, a revised and updated version of the Bibliography of Industrial and Distributive-trade Statistics 7/ will be submitted for publication. It will be an annotated list of national inquiries and statistics on mining, quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas, water, construction, wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels for some 160 countries.

C. Collection, compilation, dissemination and analysis of international trade statistics (programme element 1.3)

19. The collection and compilation of international trade data for publication in Commodity Trade Statistics, the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, the World Trade Annual and Supplement, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and the Statistical Yearbook are done on a continuing basis.

20. The Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, 1978, 8/ containing data for 1978, was issued in December 1979. In order to facilitate its use and enlarge its circulation, it was printed bilingually (English/French) for the first time. Its appearance has been improved by photo-composition.

21. The number of entries in the 1978 issue was 1,543,000, of which 790,000 were new as compared with 1,217,000 in the 1976 issue of which 490,000 were new.

22. Volume I of the Yearbook contains summary tables showing the salient features of world trade in current and constant prices, together with external trade indicators and the export structure of developing countries. It contains detailed chapters for 160 countries, covering about 90 per cent of world merchandise trade. Volume II contains commodity tables and matrices showing trade at the group (three-digit) level of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

23. The 1979 issue of the Yearbook is expected to be published in November 1980. It will include the same features as the 1978 issue but will also contain

7/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XVII.7.

8/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.79.XVII.16, vols. I and II.

supplementary tables showing external trade by economic or geographical groupings, excluding intra trade. The SITC, Rev.2, 9/ will be used for the first time for the countries which have implemented that classification.

24. Commodity Trade Statistics (Statistical Papers, Series D) have continued to be issued. They are processed by the Commodity Trade Unit of the United Nations Statistical Office, based at Geneva. The number of countries for which data are processed has continued to increase (117 as of 1 June 1975, 125 as of 1 June 1977 and 132 as of 1 June 1980). A large number of countries have adopted national nomenclatures compatible with SITC, Rev.2, beginning with data for the year 1978. This has caused a delay in reporting of basic data by some countries and increased the work of the Geneva Unit, which converts the new national codes to SITC, Rev.2, and produces (at least, for the present time) the national data according to both SITC, Rev.1 and Rev.2.

25. There are plans to increase the number of countries for which quarterly data are being processed. To that effect, the more statistically advanced among the developing countries have been asked to send quarterly data beginning with January-March 1980.

26. The statistics included in Statistical Papers, Series D, are also available on microfiche, with additional detail. As a rule, the microfiche is available 15 days after the magnetic tapes containing basic data have been processed. On 1 June 1980, 790 country/periods were available on microfiche for the years 1971-1979, compared with 442 country/periods available on 1 June 1979 and 93 on 1 June 1978. It is intended that data for periods from 1962 to 1970 should also be made available on microfiche.

27. The 1977 World Trade Annual was issued in July 1979. 10/ The 1978 edition is expected to be submitted for publication in September 1980. The 1977 Supplement to the World Trade Annual was issued in December 1979. 11/ The 1978 is expected to be submitted for publication in December 1980.

28. The external trade data base (1962-1979) was previously kept on about 1,800 magnetic tapes, one for each country/period. It is now stored on two disks in a compressed format in 29,350 tracks. Before compression, the data were maintained in 112,224,571 records of 88 bytes; there are now 1,699 partitioned data sets, composed of 3,855,472 variable length records making a total of 538,895,957 bytes. This means that the number of bytes written on disk represents only 5.46 per cent of the number of bytes written previously on the annual tapes. Users of the trade data may now have direct or sequential access, on-line or batch processing, to any record of the trade data bank. The system of compression, created and implemented by the Geneva Unit, keeps the data as reliable as possible and includes all related trade information required to utilize the data.

9/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XVII.6.

10/ 1977 World Trade Annual, published by Walker and Co., New York, for the United Nations Statistical Office.

11/ 1977 Supplement to the World Trade Annual, published by Walker and Co., New York, for the United Nations Statistical Office.

29. A number of procedures, generalized programs and subroutines conceived of, and established by, the Geneva Unit have been put at the disposal of all users to access and to manipulate the data stored in the trade data bank in ways believed to be of general interest.

30. Ad hoc tabulations to meet internal and external requests have been processed. External requests are continuously increasing, and the early availability of microfiches enables the Office to meet the requests more readily than before. Similarly, the retrieval of basic information is easier and quicker than before because of the compressed form in which it is now maintained.

D. Standards, methods and classifications of international trade statistics (programme element 1.4)

31. A statistical analysis of the new distribution of commodities resulting from the implementation of SITC, Rev.2, has been undertaken in order to check whether the homogeneity of the various levels of aggregation is higher than in the previous versions of SITC. The value of the trade of market economies according to the headings of the Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature (CCCN) was computed at the request of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) for similar purposes.

32. An expert group met in March and April 1980 to review a draft revision of International Trade Statistics; Concepts and Definitions ^{12/} The draft revision, which takes into account the views of two expert groups (the one that met in 1980 and the other in 1977) and of the Statistical Commission at its twentieth session, ^{13/} is available to Commission members (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/52/Rev.1). A summary of the revision "International trade statistics; concepts and definitions" (E/CN.3/540) is before the Commission.

33. Two volumes of the indexes to SITC, Rev.2, have been prepared and are expected to be submitted for publication in 1980. One is an index in SITC order and the other is in alphabetical order. These are expected to be of great assistance for developing countries which are planning to adopt SITC, Rev.2.

^{12/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.XVII.16.

^{13/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No. 3 (E/1979/23), paras. 30-36.

E. Recurrent publications and standards, methods
and classification of energy statistics
(programme element 1.5)

34. A progress report on energy statistics (E/CN.3/538) is before the Commission. It reports on the development of tasks recommended by the Commission for implementation, the development of current energy publications and co-ordination and co-operation in energy statistics.

F. Transport statistics (programme element 1.6)

35. A progress report on shipping statistics (E/CN.3/539) is before the Commission. The updating of the Results of a Pilot Study in Maritime Transport for the Years 1966-1968 ^{14/} has been completed up to 1975 and work is well under way for updating up to 1978. The work on the promotion of a uniform system for collecting economic statistics of shipping, with emphasis on developing countries, has continued.

^{14/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.XVII.9.

II. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, INCOME DISTRIBUTION
AND RELATED STATISTICS (SUBPROGRAMME 2)

A. Review and further development of the United Nations System
of National Accounts (SNA) (programme element 2.1)

36. The review of national experience with SNA has continued, and planning for work on the further development of the system has begun. An Expert Group Meeting on Future Directions for Work on the United Nations System of National Accounts was convened in April 1980. Two discussion papers were considered by the Expert Group, one covering the topic as a whole and one focusing particularly on external transactions. The first of the papers was also discussed by the Working Party on National Accounts and Balances of the Conference of European Statisticians in February 1980. Two documents before the Commission, namely "Future directions for work on the System of National Accounts (SNA)" (E/CN.3/541) and "Relationship of the Revised System of National Accounts (SNA) to the International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Manual" (E/CN.3/542), reflect the priority concerns of both groups, as well as the conclusions of the review of countries' experiences.

37. The national accounts questionnaire, used to collect data for the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, was revised to reflect the findings of the review of SNA and to meet future data needs more adequately. The questionnaire, which is issued jointly by the United Nations Statistical Office and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), had last been revised in 1970 shortly after the present version of SNA was published. Discussions relative to its updating have been going on with OECD for several years, and a draft revision was circulated for comment in August 1979. A revised version was discussed by an ad hoc working group of OECD in February 1980, and a final version, together with a new instruction booklet, is expected to be put into use for the round of data collection beginning in September 1980.

38. Work continued on the Handbook of National Accounting, which will consist of individual parts on sources and methods. Parts 2-6, covering production, income and outlay, public sector, flow of funds and external-transactions accounts, are expected to be completed by early 1981. Part 1 will be an introduction to national accounting. The final two publications in the earlier series on SNA were issued, namely, Manual on National Accounts in Constant Prices 15/ and Guidelines on Statistics of Tangible Assets. 16/

B. Promotion of linkages between economic statistics and social
and demographic statistics (programme element 2.2)

39. Work under this programme element is closely related to that under programme element 4.1 (Integration and improvement of social and demographic statistics), and the two should be considered together (see paras. 62-68 below).

15/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.5.

16/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.XVII.2.

40. A technical report entitled The Development of Integrated Data Bases for Social, Economic and Demographic Statistics was published in 1980. ^{17/} Further work in this area has been hampered by lack of staff and recruitment delays and has, therefore, been limited to (a) the preparation of the conceptual document 'Role of macro-data and micro-data structures in the integration of demographic, social and economic statistics' (E/CN.3/552), which is before the Commission, and (b) work on concepts and classifications that are necessary for linking economic and social data. Exploratory work on the concepts and classifications for income distribution, including the household and classifications appropriate to it, has begun. Work on classifications of age and of size and type of place are reported under programme element 4.1. In addition, the relationship of economic to social and demographic statistics was discussed by the expert group on SNA (see para. 36 above) and its views are reflected in document E/CN.3/541.

C. Linking of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) (programme element 2.3)

41. Efforts were continued on the illustrative calculations being carried out for a number of countries with both market and centrally planned economies, designed to supplement the theoretical principles for linking the two systems published in Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy; Part One, Conceptual Relationships. ^{18/} It is hoped that the results of these calculations will be published in 1981.

42. The elaboration of the conceptual framework for SNA/MPS comparisons has continued. The main effort has been directed towards achieving a better consistency in the basic components of the conceptual framework, clarifying the general approach and the role of the matrices and introducing some additional adjustments. Exploration began on the possibility of adapting the System of Indicators of Non-Material Services developed recently by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) for calculation of the gross domestic product by countries using MPS. A detailed account of the work is given in the progress report on SNA/MPS comparisons (E/CN.3/543), which is before the Commission.

D. Development, updating and harmonizing of standard international classifications (programme element 2.4)

43. A progress report on the harmonization of economic classifications (E/CN.3/545) is before the Commission. The second session of the Joint United Nations Statistical Office/Statistical Office of the European Communities Working Group on World-Level Classifications met in 1979 and reached general agreement on categories of an intermediate level which could be inserted in international activity classifications. The categories cover only industries producing

^{17/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.14.

^{18/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.XVII.6.

transportable goods. At its third session, the Working Group will consider a proposal on the same lines for industries producing non-transportable goods and services. The Working Group also considered steps to harmonize activity and goods classifications. The Harmonized System of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) has an important role in this work, provided it takes into account the industrial-origin criterion. Proposals on this matter are being prepared for submission to CCC.

44. A register of countries and areas is in general use in the United Nations Statistical Office. Further work needs to be done on the design and content of a publication to facilitate use of the register by others both within and outside the United Nations system.

45. Work on computerizing the International Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS), in order to complete its revision and prepare it for publication together with the necessary indexes, has continued but has been less rapid than expected. The computerization has been completed and, provided staff is available, the revision should be finished in 1981.

E. Collection, compilation and dissemination of national accounts statistics (programme element 2.5)

46. The Statistical Office continued its publication programme in national accounts statistics. The 1978 edition of the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics 19/ shows in volume I, Individual Country Data, detailed national accounts estimates for 151 countries and in volume II, International Tables, data for 155 countries. Volume I and a part of volume II were produced by photocomposition, which has considerably reduced the time, effort and cost in producing the Yearbook.

47. The increased coverage in the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics was also reflected in the other Statistical Office publications that carry national accounts tables, namely the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, the Statistical Yearbook, the Compendium of Housing Statistics, the Compendium of Social Statistics, as well as in the Year Book of Labour Statistics of the International Labour Office (ILO).

48. National accounts data have been collected from 155 countries through questionnaires and other sources. The traditional national accounts questionnaire has been redesigned and replaced by a computer-generated joint United Nations/OECD pre-filled questionnaire. The new questionnaire contains the items for which estimates had previously been submitted by the countries. This has resulted in reduced response burden on countries, more consistent and complete figures and a saving of resources. The national accounts estimates are processed by computer at the United Nations and stored on magnetic tape. This tape has increasingly

19/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.8, vols. I and II.

become the main source of basic national accounts data. A number of units of the United Nations Secretariat, some specialized agencies and other international organizations have drawn heavily on the data contained on the tape.

49. The Office continued to publish the public finance-chapter of the Statistical Yearbook. A total of 92 countries were covered in 1979.

50. A new bench-mark publication entitled National Accounting Practices in Seventy Countries, a supplement to the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, was published in 1980. ^{20/} It presents a comprehensive and detailed description of sources and methods used for the construction of national accounts estimates. The information included was based on drafts prepared in the Statistical Office and submitted to the 70 countries for comment. Brief descriptions on sources and methods were incorporated in the 1978 Yearbook in 25 country chapters. The 1979 Yearbook will have brief descriptions on sources and methods for 45 countries.

F. Statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation (programme element 2.6)

51. In 1980, work was finalized on a publication containing a comparative study of national practices in the collection and compilation of income distribution statistics. The publication summarizes, for each country, the methods, concepts and results based on the available national publications. The Statistical Office has not made an assessment of the adequacy of the methods employed or the reliability of the results other than that expressed by the countries themselves. Each country chapter is made up of five parts: introduction, standards adopted, data collection, presentation and reliability. For some countries, a sixth part on other sources is included when more than one source was available. The draft chapters were sent to the countries for comment, and the comments were incorporated in the manuscript before it was submitted for publication. About 60 countries from all regions of the world are included in the study.

52. A short paper on conceptual problems arising in the measurement of the distribution of levels of living was prepared for the technical conference on this topic convened by the World Bank in February 1980, and a proposal for further work in this area was drawn up.

^{20/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.19, vols. I, II and III.

III. PRICE STATISTICS AND RELATED AREAS (SUBPROGRAMME 3)

A. International Comparison of Purchasing Powers (ICP)
(programme element 3.1)

53. Details on the progress of this programme element are given in a document entitled "International Comparison Project (ICP) developments" (E/CN.3/544), also before the Commission.

54. The results of phase III, in which 34 countries were studied for the year 1975, have been finalized and will be published early in 1981.

55. Phase IV, for which the bench-mark year is 1980, is under way; approximately 70 countries are participating. The price surveys were carried out in Latin America in 1979 and in Europe and North America in 1980. They will take place in Africa early in 1981 and in Asia and the Pacific at the end of 1981. Some methodological problems are currently being reviewed and the methodology improved in important sectors such as health, education and government services. A consultant has been hired to examine some problems of sampling and the aggregation formulae. Research has started on methods which would permit the inclusion of more countries in ICP on the basis of reduced information, on making interregional comparisons and on updating the results to non-bench-mark years.

56. Work has proceeded on revising the specifications manuals for consumption, producer durables and construction.

57. The main problem concerns the funding of ICP. Although the United Nations, some other international and national organizations have made, and are currently making, important monetary or in-kind contributions, the over-all funding is insufficient.

B. Price statistics for commodities entering international trade (programme element 3.2)

58. The second revision of Methods Used in Compiling the United Nations Price Indexes for Basic Commodities in International Trade was issued in 1979. 21/

59. The draft of a publication entitled "Statistical analysis of unit values" was discussed at an informal meeting on the measurement of prices in international trade, held in March 1980. It is being revised and is expected to be submitted for publication in 1980.

60. The number of price indexes of exports of manufactured goods has recently increased. The dissemination of price data and indexes on goods entering international trade has continued through contributions to recurrent publications and in response to ad hoc requests.

21/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.6.

C. Methodological development of price and related statistics,
and co-ordination of related international activities
(programme element 3.3)

61. Efforts continued to strengthen the methodological basis of work on price statistics and to promote an integrated and co-ordinated approach at both the national and international level. Within this framework, a Manual on Producers' Price Indices for Industrial Goods was issued in 1979, 22/ and one on consumer price indexes has been prepared in collaboration with the ILO and is expected to be completed before the end of 1980. A technical report on price and quantity measurement in external trade has also been prepared and will be followed by a supplement providing detailed guidance on alternative approaches to this work based on specific national practices. At the international level, an integrated and co-ordinated approach to work on price statistics has been promoted through the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and through the progressive elaboration by the Statistical Office of a well-defined interagency programme for data collection, compilation and dissemination. A meeting for the establishment of a regional programme of price statistics work was held in Africa in June 1979. A similar meeting for Asia and the Pacific has been proposed to be held in April 1981.

22/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.11.

IV. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS (SUBPROGRAMME 4)

A. Integration and improvement of social and demographic statistics (programme element 4.1)

62. This programme element is closely related to programme element 2.2 (Promotion of linkages between economic statistics and social and demographic statistics) (see paras. 39-40 above), and the two should be considered together. In particular, work on some aspects of conceptual questions of the integration of economic and social statistics is reported under programme element 2.2.

63. The Expert Group on Revision of the United Nations Handbook of Household Surveys 23/ met in Geneva in March 1980. It considered a draft revision in three parts. Part One covers general survey planning and operations; Part Two consists of essays prepared by the regional commissions and specialized agencies on issues in survey content, design and operations; Part Three contains selected questionnaires reprinted from national household surveys and a limited amount of technical information on them. The draft is being further revised in accordance with the recommendations of the expert group and is expected to be completed in 1980.

64. A technical report entitled Improving Social Statistics in Developing Countries; Conceptual Framework and Methods was published in 1979. 24/ Part one discusses requirements and means for improving social statistics in developing countries, and part two presents a framework for the integration of social and demographic statistics in developing countries.

65. Two documents, "Draft guide-lines on age-group classifications" (E/CN.3/550) and "National practices in classifications of size and type of locality and urban/rural areas" (E/CN.3/551) are before the Commission.

66. Work continued on a technical report on the development of statistics of time use, with the collection of information from countries on their practices.

67. The progress report on national and international work on social indicators (E/CN.3/517), which was presented to the Statistical Commission at its twentieth session, is being revised and will be circulated for comment. It reviews recent developments in approximately 40 countries and 10 statistical services within the United Nations system and other organizations active in this field.

68. The thirteenth report in the series Sample Surveys of Current Interest, describing sample surveys in more than 50 countries, was published in 1979. 25/ Countries have been asked for contributions to the fourteenth report.

23/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.64.XVII.13.

24/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.12.

25/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.2.

B. Development and use of statistics for services
for children and youth (programme element 4.2)

69. Work continued on the project to assist developing countries in collecting and compiling integrated statistical information for planning, monitoring and evaluating services benefiting children and youth. The project was initiated in 1974 with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and in collaboration with the interested specialized agencies. Work on methodology and guide-lines is proceeding with a view to providing technical advice in the use of social statistics along the general lines recommended by the Commission at its nineteenth session. 26/ At the same time, work is being carried out in selected countries with a view to assisting individual national programmes. Support, with UNICEF financing, was given to statistical activities in 1979 and 1980 in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Somalia and Thailand. At its May 1980 session, the Executive Board of UNICEF, recommended a phased intensification of these initiatives over the next few years at both the country and regional level.

C. Demographic statistics methods (programme element 4.3)

70. The Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, 27/ approved by the Statistical Commission at its twentieth session, was published in 1980. A study of census staffing and costs requirements was completed in 1980.

71. A report on the elimination of sex-based stereotypes from population census and related statistics was issued in 1980 (ST/ESA/STAT/99) and was sent to national statistical offices for comment. Work on other aspects of census methodology is continuing. A progress report on the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme (E/CN.3/546) is before the Commission.

72. A publication entitled Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, approved by the Statistical Commission at its nineteenth session, was issued in 1980. 28/ A document entitled "Strategy for implementation of recommendations on international migration statistics" (E/CN.3/549) is before the Commission. Preparations began in 1980 for an expert group to meet in 1981 to consider methods of collection and compilation of consolidated statistics on arrivals and departures and further work on the development of international migration statistics. A technical report on the improvement of statistics on the outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries was submitted in 1980 for publication.

26/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5910), paras. 90-98.

27/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.XVII.8.

28/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.18.

73. A study of national experiences and plans in the construction and use of a census data base in connexion with population censuses was initiated in 1980. National provisions relating to the confidentiality and privacy of such data bases are also being examined in the study.

74. A revision of the Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods 29/ is being prepared in two parts. Work has been initiated on Part I, which deals with methods for implementing Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System. 30/ Work on Part II, which presents the results of a study of national practices in 112 countries, is nearing completion. A progress report on civil registration and vital statistics (E/CN.3/547) is before the Commission.

D. Collection, compilation and dissemination of demographic statistics - recurrent publications (programme element 4.4)

75. The 1977 Demographic Yearbook 31/ was issued in February 1979 and featured, for the first time, international migration statistics as a special topic. The 1978 Demographic Yearbook 32/ was issued in May 1980, and a Historical Supplement is expected to be issued later in 1980 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Yearbook. The Supplement will be entirely photo-composed and will feature historical time series for the first time, covering the period 1948-1978.

76. The Population and Vital Statistics Report (Statistical Papers, Series A) has continued to be issued quarterly.

77. Assistance was provided to several units of the United Nations and the United Nations system and to the public in referencing and compiling tables and series on an ad hoc basis for specialized reports and studies.

E. Housing statistics methods (programme element 4.5)

78. A document entitled "Status report on and plans for the improvement of housing and related statistics" (E/CN.3/548) is before the Commission. Pursuant to the recommendation of the Statistical Commission at its twentieth session, the principles and recommendations concerning housing censuses were incorporated into a single volume with those concerning population censuses. The volume entitled Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, was published in 1980. 33/

29/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.55.XVII.1.

30/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.XVII.9.

31/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.78.XIII.1.

32/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.1.

33/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.XVII.8.

F. Collection, compilation and dissemination of social and housing statistics (programme element 4.6)

79. The Compendium of Social Statistics, 1977, 34/ issued in May 1980 when unusual delays in printing were resolved; was a joint undertaking of the United Nations, the International Labour Office, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization; other international organizations also contributed material. The Compendium has over 1,300 pages, covers 14 fields of social concern and is divided into four parts, namely, estimates and projections for the world and regions, key series for countries or areas, general series for countries or areas and general series for cities or urban agglomerations; there is also a subject index.

80. The Compendium of Housing Statistics, 1975-1977 is expected to be issued in 1980. It includes three new tables to meet emerging user requirements in this field, that is, on housing characteristics and land use in urban agglomerations and environmental pollution.

81. Ad hoc assistance was provided to units of the United Nations and the United Nations system and to the public in referencing and compiling statistics for specialized reports and studies.

G. Statistics of the environment (programme element 4.7)

82. Work on environment statistics is being carried out with the assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). A progress report on environment statistics (E/CN.3/553) is before the Commission.

83. Technical reports have been drafted for five core areas of environmental concern: energy, land, natural resources, human settlements and pollution. The reports represent the first steps towards the preparation of guide-lines for environment statistics in these areas.

84. The first draft of a report on conceptual frameworks for the development and organization of environment statistics has been completed. It is directed towards the eventual development of an over-all structure or framework for the field.

85. A directory of country practices and plans is in preparation. It will provide a standard inventory against which country practices, needs, plans and priorities can be assessed, as well as a convenient tool for reviewing current statistics on the environment.

86. Two regional workshops have been held, one at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and one at Santiago, Chile, and it is expected that two more will be held

34/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.80.XVII.6.

in 1980 and 1981, at Honolulu and Bangkok. The aim of the workshops is to test the suitability of the technical reports (see para. 83 above) for meeting national and regional needs and the feasibility of implementing the proposals contained in them.

87. A pilot study is under way in Kenya and is expected to be completed by the end of 1980. Its purpose is to examine in detail national priorities, problems and practices in the field of environment statistics.

88. A mid-project review of achievements in the United Nations Statistical Office/UNEP project was prepared in March 1980.

89. For the future, complementary programmes have been agreed upon with the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that provide for the joint development of environment statistics for the regions as a part of the United Nations Statistical Office/UNEP global project. A proposal representing the second phase of the United Nations Statistical Office/UNEP work covering the period 1982-1985 will be submitted to UNEP in 1980.

V. IMPROVED DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS (SUBPROGRAMME 5)

A. Compendiums of economic and social statistics -
recurrent publications (programme element 5.1)

90. Publication of the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics continued. It presents data for seven years and 18 current months on 74 subjects from over 200 countries. Various aggregates related to geographical regions, economic classes and countries of the world are shown in 27 additional special tables. Over the past two years, improvements have been made to the Bulletin. It is expected that by the end of 1980, approximately 80 per cent of the tables will be produced directly from computer tapes using photocomposition. Aside from a slight increase in timeliness, the major benefit of this approach is a saving of about \$100 per page per month in typesetting costs. Two new quarterly special tables were introduced, one on imports of mineral fuels and related materials and the other on some indicators on fuel imports.

91. The 1978 Statistical Yearbook 35/ was published in September 1979. The 1979 Statistical Yearbook is being produced entirely by photocomposition instead of the traditional typesetting methods, and substantial work has been done to implement the change. For 25 per cent of the tables, magnetic tape will replace manuscript as input. This will marginally improve timeliness, and it is expected that there will be a saving of about \$60 per page in typesetting costs.

92. Efforts continued to be made to improve the content of the Yearbook; consequently, five new tables have been introduced covering some of the important trends in the world economy. These consisted of one table showing price movements in external trade; three tables on industrial property statistics, giving information on patents, industrial designs and trademarks; and one table containing data on gross domestic product in comparable currency units. The information for the last table was obtained from the results of phase II of the International Comparison Project. It has been decided to increase the number of tables shown on a rotating basis. Consequently, several of the relatively less important commodity tables will, from now on, be published once every few years.

93. The 1977 Supplement to the Statistical Yearbook and the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics was published in 1979. 36/

94. The third and fourth editions of the annual Statistical Pocketbook: World Statistics in Brief were published. 37/ Photocomposition was used in both editions in order to improve the appearance of the publications and the legibility of the data. The fifth edition is scheduled to be issued in the fourth quarter of 1980. There are plans to convert the publication to a more convenient size

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35/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.79.XVII.1.

36/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.XVII.10.

37/ United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.78.XVII.9 and E.80.XVII.3.

and to use it to publicize more intensively the statistics and publications of the Statistical Office. By reducing the contents and using in-house software, the cost and selling price are expected to be reduced by about 75 per cent.

B. Improved computerization of statistics (programme element 5.2)

95. Version 3.0 of the United Nations Statistical Information System (UNSYS) was completed in 1980. The system is designed to allow efficient and flexible management of an integrated data base. It can be used through on-line terminals or through traditional job submissions in the central computing facility. The system has been used extensively to introduce photocomposition and effect savings in publications. Other facilities more recently programmed make possible automatic application of conversion factors, calculation of index numbers and display of histograms. The data base has been extended by the introduction of data on national accounts, industry and energy.

96. Computer systems to handle on-line correction and manipulation of text, in addition to those already mentioned, were completed for processing the indexes to SITC and ICGS.

97. A new system was completed to produce the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics. The 1979 issue was photocomposed and bilingual for the first time. A system to handle super-compacted data was completed in the Geneva Unit of the Statistical Office and has been transferred to Headquarters for use.

98. The facilities of UNSIS are being used in 1980 for a revised and expanded publication on energy statistics (Statistical Papers, Series J). This will be the first output completely produced using UNSIS.

C. Review and co-ordination of statistical publications and assessment of the consistency and quality of the data (programme element 5.3)

99. A promotional brochure, describing the United Nations statistical publications, was produced and distributed by the Sales Section, Publishing Division, Department of Conference Services. In addition, reader response cards distributed with some of the major United Nations statistical publications have been received and analysed as a basis for considering improvements in the publications.

100. Efforts to issue statistical publications earlier have been hampered by delays in printing and by the fact that a significant number of other improvements are being introduced. The contents have been expanded, presentation improved and costs reduced. In some cases, the contents are more up to date because of the receipt of updated information on magnetic tape.

VI. CO-ORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES
(SUBPROGRAMME 6)

A. Co-ordination of statistical programmes of the
United Nations (programme element 6.1)

101. Efforts have continued to maintain and further develop effective co-ordination of the international statistical system. This is essential since the system is highly decentralized and operates with limited resources. The efforts are directed at ensuring a co-ordinated and integrated international statistical programme to assist national statistical systems in both developing and developed countries.

102. Substantive servicing was provided for the twenty-first session of the Statistical Commission (30 documents were prepared), the eighth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination of the Commission (six documents) and the thirteenth and fourteenth sessions of the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) (15 documents for each session). ^{38/} Special co-ordination meetings were held with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Inter-American Statistical Institute. Actions were initiated and monitoring maintained to ensure that decisions taken at the above meetings were carried out.

103. Close liaison was maintained with the statistical services of the regional commissions, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as with national statistical services. This was achieved through (a) participation in a wide range of international statistical meetings, for example, expert groups, working groups, sessions of the International Statistical Institute, the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, the Conference of European Statisticians, the Inter-American Statistical Conference and the Standing Commission on Statistics of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; (b) visits to various international organizations and national services for technical and co-ordination purposes and (c) joint preparation and mutual exchange of planning, technical and co-ordination documents for review and comment.

104. Special attention was given to strengthening co-ordination with the regional commissions with a view to integrating their work more closely with that of other parts of the international statistical system. To this end, the statisticians of the regional commissions are now invited to participate in the

^{38/} For information on the sessions see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No. 3 (E/1979/23); the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its eighth session (E/CN.3/536), also before the Commission; and the reports of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities on its thirteenth and fourth sessions (ACC/1979/40 and ACC/1980/14).

annual sessions of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities and to exchange periodic progress reports on current activities.

105. In September 1979, the Statistical Office initiated a monthly Newsletter as a way of keeping the international statistical community aware of its major activities.

106. In 1979, an "Inventory of data collection activities" was issued (E/CN.3/AC.1/R.10). It outlined the collection activities of the United Nations system, including questionnaires and collection through magnetic tapes, and detailed the exchange arrangements for data among the various members of the system. The inventory has been prepared biennially and used as a basis for co-ordinating the data collection activities and promoting the joint use of data to help minimize the reporting burden on national statistical services. Copies of the inventory were sent to central statistical services for their information and possible use in co-ordinating the filling out of questionnaires. A number of initiatives were taken to streamline the international collection of data, including the discontinuance of some collection by some organizations; for example, ESCAP now receives directly from countries a copy of their questionnaires for the United Nations Monthly Bulletin of Statistics thus eliminating the need for ESCAP to request data on the same subjects. Both the introduction and the discontinuance of international statistical questionnaires are monitored by the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities.

107. In 1979, the Office prepared for the Conference of European Statisticians a document entitled "Data banks of economic and social statistics" (CES/412). It described the data banks maintained by the statistical services of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations. The document was prepared to help promote the interchange of data among the international organizations in the most efficient ways. It also serves as an aid to users of statistics in determining which organizations to approach for specific data in machine-readable form.

108. A "Country nomenclature for statistical use" is updated periodically to reflect changes in the official names of countries. Amendments are sent to various units of the United Nations Secretariat, as well as to various statistical services in the United Nations system.

109. Two documents "Review of achievements in co-ordination in selected areas and international statistical programmes, 1981-1985" (E/CN.3/558) and "International technical co-operation in statistics, 1976-1985" (E/CN.3/557) are before the Commission. They reflect, in an integrated and co-ordinated way, the work and plans of the United Nations Statistical Office, regional commissions, specialized agencies and other international statistical organizations. The document on technical co-operation also reflects the assistance provided directly to countries on a bilateral basis. Analyses of achievements in co-ordination in selected areas of statistics were made, including a review of problems, with a view to applying successful experience to other fields.

110. The implications of changes in technology for the collection and dissemination

of statistics were discussed by the ACC Sub-Committee. The international statistical organizations have started to plan how to adjust to, and make use of, the technological changes that are occurring and are expected to occur during the present decade.

B. Catalogues of economic and social statistics (programme element 6.2)

111. Work continued on updating and expanding the Directory of International Statistics. 39/ Materials were received from the international organizations, and a revision of Part Four was issued as "Data banks of economic and social statistics" (see para. 107 above). A preliminary revision of Part Three, "International statistical standards", has been completed, and of Part Two, "International statistical series", substantially completed. Work has begun on the revision of Part One, "International statistical services".

C. Improvement of statistical organization (programme element 6.3)

112. Volume I of the revised Handbook of Statistical Organization was published in 1980. 40/ It deals with general issues of organizational structure of a statistical agency, degree of centralization, external and internal capability, priority setting, integration and co-ordination and planning.

113. The Statistical Office co-operated with the Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for Developing Countries in the preparations for a seminar on setting and implementing statistical priorities, held in July 1980 for French-speaking participants. The Office participated in the Seminar on Statistical Organization organized by ESCAP at Wellington, New Zealand, in April 1979.

114. Owing to a loss of posts in the Statistical Office, activities in this important field have been temporarily reduced.

D. Statistical services provided to General Assembly organs and other bodies, on request (programme element 6.4)

115. In 1979, the Statistical Office prepared four documents for the Committee on Contributions, providing for each Member State national accounts estimates, population estimates, exchange rates, prices and data on the amortization of external public debt. During the thirty-ninth session of the Committee, held in June 1979, 49 conference room papers were prepared in reply to ad hoc requests. In 1980, the Statistical Office, in response to General Assembly resolution 34/6 B, prepared four documents covering national wealth, economic and

39/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XVII.11.

40/ A Study on the Organization of National Statistical Services and Related Management Issues, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.17).

social indicators of capacity to pay, comparisons between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, percentage limits on assessments between successive scales of assessments, the ability of Member States to secure foreign convertible currency, heavy dependence of certain Member States on exports of one or a few products and inflation.

116. At the request of the Centre for Disarmament, the Statistical Office assisted the Ad Hoc Panel on Military Budgeting during its first four sessions, held in May and August 1979 and January and June-July 1980, providing the necessary data and statistical advice. The Office will continue to assist the Panel at its fifth session, scheduled to be held in August 1980.

117. At the request of the Secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, the Statistical Office provided programming support and services to produce extensive tabulations of data from several international sources. The tables on the status of women were used at the Conference held at Copenhagen in July 1980.

VII. SUPPORT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION (SUBPROGRAMME 7)

Improvement of statistical capabilities of developing countries
(programme element 7.1) and Improvement of statistical data
processing capabilities of developing countries
(programme element 7.2)

118. Substantive technical support continued for technical co-operation activities in various fields of statistics and statistical data processing. Two documents entitled "International technical co-operation in statistics 1976-1985", (E/CN.3/557) and "Progress report on statistical data processing" (E/CN.3/555), are before the Commission.

119. Considerable progress is being made in establishing projects in a number of countries through the National Household Survey Capability Programme, and the regional commissions are playing a vital role in this. A document "Progress report on the National Household Survey Capability Programme" (E/CN.3/556) is before the Commission.

120. Support continued for the training of statistical personnel. A document entitled "Review of training of statistical personnel" (E/CN.3/554) is before the Commission.

VIII. PROGRAMME SUPPORT (SUBPROGRAMME 8)

Programme formulation and management (programme element 8.1)

121. Several central functions were carried out on a continuing basis covering all aspects of management and planning in the Statistical Office, including preparation of the 1980-1981 programme budget, the 1980-1983 medium-term plan, the programme performance review, the annual publication programme, personnel management and all other functions required for the effective management of the statistical programme. Work began on the establishment of an internal management information system for the Office as a support for monitoring activities. A correspondence registry was maintained to support the day-to-day operations of the Office.

122. Liaison was provided with the administrative and operational divisions of the United Nations, and close contact was maintained with the work of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies to ensure that the statistics programme continues to respond to their requirements.

123. Work began to include information about various activities and projects of the Office in the computerized information system maintained by the Information Systems Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. The purpose is to record, for easy retrieval and dissemination to interested parties, information that would not otherwise be readily available
