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INDUSTRIAL, TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS:  
INDUSTRIAL AND TRANSPORT STATISTICS

Draft revision of International Recommendations for  
Industrial Statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The Statistical Commission will have before it a draft revision of International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics, 1/ which was published in 1968 in response to Statistical Commission resolution 6 (XIII). The draft revision, issued in a limited number of copies, will be sent to Commission members and participants prior to the session.
2. The 1968 publication, which provided a set of basic recommendations for conducting industrial surveys, has been used extensively by developing and developed countries alike. The recommendations proved to be very useful in measuring industrial activities, particularly in countries with developing economies, as well as in fostering a substantial degree of international comparability of industrial statistics.
3. During the past decade, however, significant developments have been observed in the approach by countries to the industrial statistics concept and in carrying out industrial inquiries. This led to the adoption by countries and some international organizations of concepts and standards not strictly in line with

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\* E/CN.3/1983/1.

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XVII.10.

those recommended by the United Nations. Whereas the 1968 recommendations are still consistent with the practices in many countries, conceptual problems as well as practical difficulties have been encountered, especially in countries that are in the process of developing an integrated statistical system within the framework of the national accounts system.

4. It is obvious that any system in use must evolve as conditions change. Thus, it was felt that guidelines supplementing the 1968 recommendations were required in order to develop more fully the relationship between the industrial statistics system and the revised System of National Accounts, <sup>2/</sup> and to co-ordinate the United Nations concepts and definitions with those being adopted by some countries and international agencies, in order to achieve greater uniformity in the application of standards by countries and to improve the international comparability of the data from surveys of industrial structure and activities.

5. It was against this background that the Statistical Office in 1980 started to revise the 1968 recommendations. A preliminary draft of the revised recommendations was completed at the beginning of 1981. Copies of the draft were distributed for comments to selected national statistical offices, interested international organizations and individual experts in this field.

6. An Expert Group Meeting to Review the Preliminary Draft of the Proposed Revision to the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics, organized by the Statistical Office, met at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 9 October 1981 to review both the draft and the comments received and to improve the recommendations as necessary.

7. The Expert Group Meeting was attended by six experts invited in their individual capacity (from Brazil, India, Nigeria, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) and an observer from the Statistical Office of the European Communities. The participants were senior statisticians invited on the basis of their expertise in industrial statistics and providing a balanced representation of economies at various levels of development from different geographical regions.

8. At the meeting, each paragraph of the draft was reviewed and questionable aspects were discussed from different points of view, including those expressed in the comments received. Features which were discussed at length were the roles of infrequent, annual and special inquiries; priorities of the items to be collected in various inquiries by countries with different economic backgrounds; concepts and definitions used in industrial surveys and those appropriate at the total-economy level, such as "census value added" in comparison to "total value added"; the treatment of non-industrial services; the applicability of the proposed recommendations to countries with different economic and social systems, including the centrally planned economies; and above all, the consistency of the draft

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<sup>2/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.69.XVII.3.

revision with the System of National Accounts as well as with the Recommendations for the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics. 3/

9. The draft that will be before the Commission will incorporate the proposals of the Expert Group, as well as the comments and suggestions received from interested parties and endorsed by the Expert Group on the draft revision initially prepared by the United Nations Statistical Office.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

10. The Commission may wish to review and approve the draft revision of International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics.

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3/ Parts One and Two (United Nations Publications, Sales Nos. E.81.XVII.11 and E/81.XVII.12).